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THE STRATEGIC AND POLITICAL DIFFERENCES
BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED
STATES, IN EUROPE, FROM THE FALL OF
FRANCE TO THE GERMAN CAPITULATION

by

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Edmonton Alberta

April 1955

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The undersigned hereby certify
that they have read and recommend to the
School of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a
thesis entitled, "The Strategic and Political
Differences between Great Britain and the
United States, in Europe, from the Fall of
France to the German Capitulation."

submitted by David Clifford Adams
in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Date

Body of Thesis

CHAPTER I

Introduction

I N T R O D U C T I O N

In 1939 Great Britain, together with France, declared war on Germany when Hitler, perhaps emboldened by the results of the Munich Crisis of the previous year, refused their warnings with respect to Poland and invaded that unhappy country. There ensued the short brutal "blitzkrieg" campaign which quickly disposed of whatever resistance Poland was able to offer. At the same time Germany's new ally entered Poland from the east and Poland lay prostrate -- divided between Russia and Germany.

From this time on and through the winter of 1939 - 40 there ensued the period of "calm before the storm" that has come to be known as the "phony war". During this time the French together with the British Expeditionary force sat down behind the supposedly impregnable "Maginot Line" and the Germans behind the "Seigfried Line". Hostile activities on land were confined to remote patrol clashes. In the air the R. A. F. flew missions over Germany dropping nothing more deadly than leaflets intended to convince the Germans of the errors of their ways. On the oceans of the World alone did the war seem to be taken seriously where the actions of surface ships and U. boats provided grim reminders of what war really was.

During this period the Allied leaders, realizing the dangers of German flanking attacks through the Low Countries, attempted to persuade the governments of Holland and Belgium to permit the continuation of the "Maginot Line" into their territories. These governments, fearing that Germany might construe such action as a violation of neutrality, refused.

In the spring of 1940 this period of inactivity was abruptly ended as Germany unleashed the full force of her "blitzkrieg" on the Western Front. The defensive positions of the Western Allies were both turned by attacks through the Low Countries and breached by direct assaults. Norway was attacked and fell after a brave fight. During this struggle the name of one of her own sons, "Quisling", became a byword for treachery. The Low Countries and France collapsed. Great Britain together with her Commonwealth and Empire stood alone.

The one ray of light penetrating the gloom of this situation was the ever growing good will of the United States. This great country from the spring of 1940 to December, 1941 gradually moved from a position of strict neutrality to one that had become, even before Pearl Harbor, one of "undeclared war". President Roosevelt saw, from the very first, that

intelligent self interest, if nothing else, made it imperative for the United States to see that Britain survived, if at all possible. To this end he did all he could, but his progress in this direction was retarded by strong isolationist and "America First" elements both inside and outside of Congress.

When the Second World War started the relations between the United States and all belligerent countries were governed by the Neutrality Acts. The purpose of these acts, passed in 1935, 1936 and 1937, was to keep the United States out of the war in 1917, says Robert Sherwood.¹ By the terms of these Acts President Roosevelt had, on the outbreak of war, to place an embargo on the shipment of arms to any belligerent nation. By the end of 1939 Congress had amended the Neutrality Acts and extended the policy of "Cash and Carry", already applicable to certain goods not classed as war materials, to include the actual munitions of war so that now, theoretically any belligerent could purchase war materials in the United States. In effect Britain and her allies were the only ones able to take advantage of this.^{1a}

1 Sherwood, R.E.; Roosevelt and Hopkins, New York 1948, p. 123

1a This was a result of Britain's control of the sea-lanes.

During the period this principle was in force Britain was forced to liquidate a considerable portion of her assets in the United States, both those owned by the government and private individuals.² By November 1940 Britain had paid the United States \$4,500,000,000 in cash and had sold \$335,000,000 worth of shares formerly held by private British citizens and requisitioned by the government in return for Sterling. Britain had only \$2,000,000,000 left. From the necessity to remedy this situation stemmed Roosevelt's "Lend-Lease" program. This scheme did not come into effect until the Lend-Lease Act was passed in March, 1941.

Another step taken by the United States on the road from neutrality to undeclared war was the "Destroyers-Bases" deal which preceded "Lend-Lease". Britain had felt the shortage of destroyers as convoy work increased following the fall of France. There had been considerable agitation in the United States to turn some World War I destroyers over to Britain. The President was prevented, by legislation from disposing of the destroyers unless the American Service Chiefs

2 Stettinius, E. R. Jr.; Lend Lease Weapon for Victory; New York, 1944; pp. 60-61

could certify them as useless to the United States. The Chief of Naval Operations could not do this as he had, lately, told a Congressional Committee that they had potential value.³ The exchange for bases circumvented this difficulty allowing the Chief of Naval Operations to say that the over-all position of the United States was improved.

By April 11, 1941 the United States had decided to extend its security zone and patrol areas to cover approximately all the Atlantic west of West Longitude 26 degrees. Britain still had to provide her own convoys but within the patrol area the Americans would seek out any ships or planes belonging to aggressor nations and would publish the position of such units discovered within the American patrol area.

In early August of 1941 there took place the first of what was to be a long series of conferences between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill. This first meeting took place in Placentia Bay, Newfoundland. A meeting such as this, between the Heads of States, when made public, could not help but emphasize to the enemy, the close association of Britain and the United States. Out of this fateful meeting came the famous joint declaration known as the Atlantic Charter.

3 Sherwood, R.E.; op. cit. p. 175

when

In September, 1941/ the British found themselves short of transports for re-enforcing the Middle East, Mr. Churchill appealed directly to the President. Mr. Roosevelt lent Britain transport for 20,000 troops and also placed extra ships on the Atlantic Patrol to free British ships.

A further step forward in the "undeclared war" was taken by the United States on September 11, 1941. A United States destroyer had been attacked by a submarine and, as a result, President Roosevelt stated that, if German or Italian vessels of war entered waters, the protection of which was necessary to the United States, they did so at their own peril. This was known as the "shoot first" policy. On September 16, direct protection was given to British Convoys by American escorts. Prior to this "Lend-Lease" had become law on March 11, 1941.⁴ Finally, in November, 1941, came the revision of the Neutrality Acts. Sections II, III, and VI were repealed thus permitting America, to send her ships into all the waters of the World and to equip them with the means to defend themselves.⁵ Thus the situation existed upon that fateful Sunday, December 7, 1941.

W.P. 4

4 Langer, W.L. and Gleason; The Undeclared War, New York, 1953, p. 284

5 Ibid; pp. 750-759

CHAPTER II

Anglo-American Differences
over the French Problem

ANGLO - AMERICAN DIFFERENCES
OVER THE FRENCH PROBLEM

The problem of France was laid at the feet of President Roosevelt even before France finally collapsed in the face of the combined German-Italian assault. On May 25, 1940 a joint British-French request had been conveyed to the President to ask him to use his good offices in a last minute effort to keep Italy out of the war. His efforts were unsuccessful.¹

On June 13, 1940 M. Reynaud made a last desperate appeal to President Roosevelt asking for armed intervention, at least to the extent of the American Fleet. In reply the President went as far as possible by promising all available supplies and at the same time he made it quite clear where his sympathies lay² but, even had he so desired, he could not, at this time, have carried the American people into war.

After the capitulation of France the three cornered relationship between France, Britain and the United States entered a new phase. These relations may be divided into three periods chronologically speaking. During the first period Britain's relations with the legal³ or Vichy govern-

1 Churchill, W.S.; Their Finest Hour, Memoirs V. II Boston, 1949, p. 123. V. will mean Volume.

2 Ibid; p. 183

3 Survey of International Affairs; America, Britain and Russia, 1941-46; Royal Institute of International Affairs, p. 44

ment of France were, to say the least, strained. One of the main reasons for this situation was the naval actions which had taken place between the British and French naval units after the French capitulation.⁴ French ships of war had been stopped at sea by British warships and escorted to places, such as Casablanca, which were considered relatively safe for their disposal.⁵ Another incident arousing bitterness was the unsuccessful Anglo-Free French attack on Dakar. On the other hand British relations with General de Gaulle and his Free or Fighting French were very close at this time.

Coincidentally with the above British relations, the United States maintained, more or less, normal diplomatic relations with Vichy. Cordell Hull limited his policy to seeing that the French Fleet and the French bases in Africa and the Western Hemisphere did not fall into German hands, to check the French Government from progressing farther in the direction of collaboration with Germany than the terms of the Armistice necessitated and to forestall any further deterioration in Anglo-French relations.⁶ This period was

4 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit. V. II, p. 236

5 Ibid.; p. 486

6 Hull, Cordell, Memoirs; New York, 1948, p. 804

to end with "Pearl Harbor" and the United States entry into the war as a belligerent.

The second period is the one beginning with the United States entry into the war and ending with the invasion of French North Africa.^{6a} During this time Britain continued her support of General de Gaulle although he was becoming more and more difficult to deal with. The United States, and particularly the State Department, wanted as few dealings with General de Gaulle as possible. His overbearing attitude and extreme sensitiveness alienated United States leaders and caused them to mistrust his intentions with respect to the future government of France.

From the time of the invasion of French North Africa these affairs changed again. There was first of all the Darlan episode at the time of the invasion, and later on there was the conflict between the American protégé Giraud and Britain's de Gaulle.

In the first period the United States as a neutral state maintained full diplomatic relations with Vichy. Robert Sherwood in his book, "Roosevelt and Hopkins", quotes Professor Langer on this point.

6a Landing in North Africa--November 7, 1942

"We kept up the connection with Vichy simply because it provided us with valuable intelligence sources and because it was felt that American influence might prevail to the extent of deterring Darlan and his associates from selling out completely to the Germans."⁷

In his "Memoirs" Mr. Cordell Hull bears out this statement, saying that United States diplomatic reports from Vichy were regularly turned over to the British.⁸ Respecting economic aid to unoccupied France, Mr. Hull notes that Admiral Leahy, the United States Ambassador to Vichy, recommended this aid in order to prevent the Germans using the misery of the French people as a lever to swing Vichy into open collaboration.

Britain, for her part, felt that any food sent to unoccupied France would indirectly relieve the pressure on Germany and thus delay the eventual liberation of France.⁹

The State Department considered another phase of economic aid even more important: this was aid to French North Africa. Mr. Robert Murphy had been sent to French North Africa as the representative of the State Department and he reported that, although the French in North Africa were loyal to Pétain, they would resist any attempt, by Hitler to take the area over. Mr. Murphy, therefore, urged economic aid to enable French

7 Sherwood, R.E.; op. cit., pp. 486-487

8 Hull, Cordell; op. cit., p. 948

9 Ibid.; p. 949

North Africa to resist effectively if the Germans made the attempt.¹⁰

Britain agreed in principle, but attached certain conditions, such as the turning over to Britain of certain British and neutral shipping in French North African ports. The United States did not like these conditions as they felt it necessary to act immediately to prevent the economic breakdown of French North Africa.¹¹

As a result of this feeling an agreement was entered into between the United States and French North Africa which would supply the area with American products, provided they were not allowed to accumulate.¹² American officials¹³ were sent to North Africa to supervise the distribution of these products.

Mr. Hull notes that the British came to approve the policy in North Africa, but continued to oppose aid to unoccupied France. Mr. Hull felt that this attitude on the part of the British would inflame the feelings of the French against them.¹⁴

There are not many references in Mr. Churchill's works bearing on this topic. In one place, in a memorandum to his

10 Ibid.; p. 950

11 Ibid.; pp. 950-951

12 Ibid.; p. 951

13 Qualified observers, who could report on the military and naval situation, were included in this economic mission.

14 Ibid., pp. 952-953

colleagues on Vichy policy, he gives the impression that, in his opinion, Vichy would be more "forthcoming" in response to a "get tough" attitude on the British part than they would to a more conciliatory attitude. He says in part,

"But in order to promote such favourable tendencies (from Vichy) we must make sure the Vichy folk are kept well ground between the upper and nether millstones of Germany and Britain."¹⁵

Later on there is some evidence of Mr. Churchill's attempt to use the projected American aid to put pressure on Vichy. He says, in a cable to President Roosevelt, April 2, 1941,

"You have already, through your Ambassador in Vichy, indicated to the French Government that negotiations for the supply of grain to unoccupied France would be greatly facilitated if French warships in metropolitan ports were gradually transferred to North African ports."

Then again later on in the same message and with regard to a report that the French battleship, "Dunkerque", was to be transferred from Oran to Toulon, he says,

"We ourselves in this situation could, of course, lend no assistance to the revictualling of France."¹⁶

Though the evidence presented here is far from conclusive, it would appear that Britain felt that France (the Vichy Government) would react more favourably to pressure while the United States State Department felt that Pétain and his government

15 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., p. 527

16 Churchill, W.S.; The Grand Alliance, Memoirs V.III, Boston, 1950, p. 131

might use this pressure to excuse a further capitulation to Germany. In addition the State Department feared the effect of a harsh policy upon the feelings of the French people in later years. Nevertheless Mr. Churchill approved of and valued the fact that, during this period, the United States maintained an Ambassador at Vichy.¹⁷

During this period the British supported General de Gaulle. On August 7, 1940 Britain had signed a military agreement with de Gaulle.¹⁸ However in speaking of this period Mr. Churchill says de Gaulle's followers could never claim to be an effective alternative French Government. Some light may be thrown on Churchill's attitude by the following note sent by him to the Foreign Secretary on July 25, 1940.

"I want to promote a kind of collusive conspiracy in the Vichy Government whereby certain members of that Government, perhaps with the consent of those who remain, will leant to North Africa in order to make a better bargain for France from the North African shore and from a position of independence. For this purpose I would use both food and other inducements, as well as the obvious arguments."¹⁹

Nevertheless the British Government did whatever was possible to increase de Gaulle's influence, authority and power.

17 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit. V. II, p. 508

18 Ibid.; p. 508

19 Ibid.; p. 508

He received British support whenever it could be given; for example arrangements were made for a de Gaullist Brigade to be sent around the Cape to Egypt to be available for the capture of Jibuti if conditions there became favourable. In connection with this action there is further evidence of Churchill's support of de Gaulle. In April of 1941 Generals de Gaulle and Le Gentilhomme favored a blockade of Jibuti. General Wavell disagreed.²⁰ In a message to General Wavell Mr. Churchill expressed himself as follows:

"I hope that on this and similar matters you will feel able to give full weight to the views of General de Gaulle, to whom His Majesty's Government have given solemn engagements, and who has their full backing as leader of the Free French Movement."²¹

The attitude of the United States and particularly that of the State Department was quite different; they could see very little advantage and considerable disadvantage in associating themselves at all closely with General de Gaulle. Mr. Cordell Hull says that the United States government was under heavy pressure both in Britain²² and the United States to recognize General de Gaulle's Free French Movement as the

20 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit. V. III, p. 86

21 Ibid.; p. 87

22 Cf. above page 13; Mr. Churchill says he did not envisage de Gaulle's movement as a government of France.

Government of France. This pressure would appear to have been public clamor and the Press. Both Mr. Hull and President Roosevelt were opposed to any action of this kind.

Mr. Hull gives three main reasons for their attitude in this matter. He says first of all that such recognition of General de Gaulle would have meant repudiation of the accepted United States policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of another country. In the second place such recognition of de Gaulle would have prevented any further normal diplomatic relations with the Vichy Government. Finally as Weygand, in common with most other French North African officials, accepted the legality of Pétain's government, it would have meant the end of dealings with him.²³

At the same time Mr. Hull makes it plainly evident that he had no liking for General de Gaulle personally. He felt he was unstable politically and in spite of his undoubted abilities could not be relied on. Mr. Hull also bitterly resented the attacks on the United States by Free French propagandists.²⁴

23 Hull, Cordell; op. cit.; p. 961

24 Ibid.; p. 962

Mr. Hull says that reports from United States representatives in France convinced the President and him that there was more support in France for Marshal Pétain than for General de Gaulle. The policy adopted by the United States was to do nothing to force de Gaulle on to the French people as the head of their government.²⁵ This policy was followed out consistently by the United States until after the invasion of Europe when it became apparent that de Gaulle enjoyed considerable support in France.

In closing this section on American policy I would like to note how Mr. Hull sums up his policy. He says the British alternately approved and disapproved of the United States policy, but the United States stuck to a consistent policy. On the one hand they resisted pressure to break with the legal French Government at Vichy and to recognize General de Gaulle's group as the French Government. On the other hand the United States let pass no opportunity to show Pétain that the United States government disapproved strongly of concessions to Germany but endeavored to help France if she lived within the terms of the Armistice.²⁶

25 Ibid.; p. 962

26 Ibid.; pp. 965-966

At the time of Pearl Harbor Churchill's foremost concern was the effect that America's entry into the war might have on United States-French relations. How would France react relative to the United States? United States contacts with Vichy had been close and helpful to Britain, who in turn had her relations with de Gaulle. Pétain was ailing, Admiral Darlan appeared to be in the ascendant, would Hitler insist on sending troops through French North Africa to re-enforce his desert army?²⁷

In fact, temporarily at least, things continued as they were. Admiral Leahy remained at Vichy and the United States continued her policy with regard to the French Government. It was not until the reorganization of the French Government in April of 1942 when M. Laval was included in the Cabinet that Admiral Leahy was called home "for consultations", Chargé d' Affaires Mathews being left in charge.²⁸ This situation continued until Germany moved into Unoccupied France at the time of "Torch".²⁹

Mr. Hull says, that at the time of the recall of Admiral Leahy, the British Government, through its Ambassador, Lord Halifax, urged the United States to maintain diplomatic relations with France. Mr. Hull resented the fact that Britain

27 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. III, pp. 631-632

28 Hull, Cordell; op. cit., pp. 1157-1158

29 "Torch" code name for Allied landings in North Africa

had agreed that Canada "break off" diplomatic relations with Vichy. Mr. Hull felt that if Canada did this, the United States could not long continue them alone.

At the same time Mr. Hull told Lord Halifax that the United States would give the Free French fullest military cooperation--but not political recognition.³⁰ Mr. Hull quotes Lord Halifax as having stated that the British would accord de Gaulle unlimited military support and that they would back him in "any local situation arising in connection with the prosecution of the war," but this was entirely different from political recognition in the broader sense, that is, recognition of the de Gaulle group as a political government either now or in the postwar period. ³¹

In December of 1941 an incident had happened with regard to the Free French that had angered Mr. Hull greatly. This was the Free French occupation of the French Islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon off the coast of Canada. When the United States had been asked about a landing of Free French on the islands the answer had been in the negative.³² Britain had said no action would be taken without the consent of the United States Government. However, the Free French forces landed on the islands

30 Hull, Cordell; op. cit., p. 1158

31 Ibid.; pp. 1158-1159

32 Ibid.; V. II, p. 1129

Survey of International Affairs; op. cit., V. IV, p. 463

on Christmas Eve, 1941. Mr. Hull protested strongly, but failed to get sufficient support, even from his government, to insist on their withdrawal.³³ The press of both the United States and Britain hailed the action with enthusiasm making it virtually impossible for President Roosevelt to bring about the withdrawal of the Free French even had he so desired.³⁴ The President's attitude had, from the outset, been unfavorable to this action partly because the United States had just concluded an agreement with Admiral Robert, the Vichy governor in Martinique, guaranteeing the maintenance of the "status quo" in French possessions in the Western Hemisphere.³⁵ Though this agreement was negotiated at this time Mr. Sumner Welles says it dated back, as part of the United States policy to the time when Admiral Leahy was first appointed Ambassador to Vichy.³⁶ Neither Roosevelt nor Prime Minister Churchill seemed too concerned about the matter.³⁷ However, Mr. Hull regarded the matter as an affront to the State Department and, because of Mr. Roosevelt's failure to give him more support, it was one of the factors that brought him to the verge of resignation as Secretary of State in January, 1942.³⁸

33 Hull, Cordell; op. cit., pp. 1129-1138

34 Sherwood, R.E.; op. cit., p. 480

35 Ibid.; p. 480

36 Welles, Sumner; Seven Decisions that Shaped History, p. 45

37 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. III, pp. 666-667

Sherwood, R.E.; op. cit., p. 486

38 Ibid.; p. 486

Hull, Cordell; op. cit., p. 1137

In a summing up of the United States policy toward Vichy up to the time of the invasion of French North Africa, Mr. Hull makes several points that will be difficult to gainsay. The first of these is that the United States policy toward Vichy was one on which the State Department and the President saw eye to eye.³⁹ Mr. Sumner Welles who, certainly, was not particularly friendly to Mr. Hull⁴⁰ bears him out in this.

Mr. Welles has this to say about the policy,

"But in its execution and its aftermath it was a policy that required decisions nearly every week at the top level from the late summer of 1940 until the invasion of North Africa in November, 1942. Every single one of the important decisions was either made or personally approved by the President."⁴¹

Mr. Hull complains that, although Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden agreed with the United States approach they made its execution difficult by their own condemnation of Vichy.⁴²

In the third place Mr. Hull contends that the policy paid valuable dividends in providing information and enabling the United States to have representatives on the spot who could convince the French that the Allies would eventually win and that collaboration with Germany was unwise.⁴³

Fourthly, the contacts between the United States and Vichy helped prevent the French fleet from passing into German hands.⁴⁴

39 Ibid.; p. 1192

40 Ibid.; pp. 1227-1231

41 Welles, Sumner; op. cit., pp. 64-65

42 Hull, Cordell; op. cit., p. 1192

43 Ibid.; pp. 1192-1193

44 Ibid.; p. 1193

The fifth point was that the United States authorities felt that there was no outstanding French leader to put in the place of Vichy. De Gaulle, they felt, should only be a military leader and to this end they attempted to support him.⁴⁵

Finally it enabled them to maintain representatives in North Africa who paved the way for the Anglo-American expedition into this theater.⁴⁶

Prior to the landings in North Africa the United States had endeavored to arrange for cooperation or, at least, lack of resistance from French North African officials when the Allied expedition landed in North Africa. General Clark had been sent there on a secret mission to meet with French leaders under the guidance of Mr. Murphy, American representative in the area.⁴⁷ In addition the Americans had entered into negotiations with General Giraud in Unoccupied France and he was brought from the Riviera to Gibraltar just before the landings.⁴⁸

The landings in Africa took place on November 7 and 8 and on the tenth news arrived that the Germans had begun to invade unoccupied France. From this time all the relations that either Britain or the United States had with the French were with those French who were participating in the struggle outside of France.⁴⁹

45 Ibid.; p. 1193

46 Ibid.; p. 1193

47 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit. V. III, p. 596
Eisenhower, D.D.; Crusade in Europe; New York, 1948, p.87

48 Ibid.; p. 99

49 On November the eighth, following the landings in North Africa Vichy France severed diplomatic relations with the United States.

When the troops landed in North Africa there was considerable opposition from the French. The leaders considered that legally only Marshal Pétain could command them to cease resistance, but ^{out} of this situation came the famous "Darlan episode".

When the Allies landed at Algiers they found there none other than Admiral Darlan, one of the foremost members of Marshal Pétain's Cabinet and here-to-fore a prominent collaborationist. However, Darlan was the person who could countermand French resistance in North Africa and who might be able to order the French fleet out of Toulon.⁵⁰ For these reasons General Eisenhower, the Allied Supreme Commander of "Torch", came to an agreement giving Darlan certain powers and agreeing to deal with him concerning matters of local interest in French North Africa in return for his influence in bringing about a cessation of resistance to Allied Forces' movements throughout French North Africa.⁵¹ Militarily this agreement was fully justified; it ended French resistance to Allied occupation of French North Africa and, undoubtedly saved many thousands of lives. Robert Sherwood sums up Eisenhower's reasons for allowing the deal to go through as follows:

50 Eisenhower, D.D.; op. cit., pp. 104-105
The Admiral was regarded by the French leaders in North Africa as being a legal representative of Marshal Pétain. Thus, failing direct instructions from Pétain, they would obey Darlan.

51 Sherwood, R.E.; op. cit., pp. 649-651
Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. III pp. 611-615; 620; 624-625

"French officials maintained that they could only act on Marshal Pétain's orders. These officials agreed that Admiral Darlan could be accepted as a representative of Pétain. Thus repudiation of Darlan would have led to resistance from French Naval and Military units in North Africa. It would have meant the end of any hope of salvaging the French Fleet at Toulon. Finally Admiral Cunningham, General Clark and the General Staff assisted in making and supported the decision."

There was, of course, great public outcry in the United States and Britain against this deal with a collaborationist, but Roosevelt and Churchill supported General Eisenhower. In a public statement the President gave reasons for, and emphasized the temporary character of, the arrangement. In a telegram to General Eisenhower he stated his distrust of Darlan and his opinion that it would be impossible to keep a known collaborationist in power for very long.⁵²

Churchill, though he himself realized the necessities behind, and the value of, the arrangement, still felt that it must be of a very temporary nature. In a telegram to President Roosevelt he said that the British Government would accept the arrangement on this basis.⁵³

Robert Sherwood states that Mr. Churchill made it clear, in the House of Commons that, "neither politically nor militarily are we directly controlling the course of events" (in North

52 Sherwood, R.E.; op. cit., p. 653

Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. IV, pp. 632-634

53 Ibid.; p. 631

Africa). Mr. Sherwood felt that the British who, perhaps previously, had resented the United States insistence on "Torch" being predominantly American could now take the attitude of loyally supporting an Ally without responsibility for the Ally's political blunders.⁵⁴

The assassination of Darlan on December 24, 1942 solved this particular problem for the Allies.

This opened the third period in the dealings between the Allies and the French and it concerned the problem of the control of the French fighting forces and the French territory which was liberated. Both of these were increasing fairly rapidly now and with the possibility of a cross-Channel operation looming up the problem was of ever growing importance.

General de Gaulle was pressing for recognition of his group as the logical authority to control and look after French interests. The American Government was as determined as ever not to do anything that would prejudice the French people's right to a free untrammeled choice of their own government when the time came.⁵⁵

Now the United States had their own French protégé in the person of General Giraud, whom they had brought out of France

54 Sherwood, R.E.; op. cit., p. 655

55 Hull, Cordell; op. cit., pp. 1208-1209

at the time of "Torch" operation. On the assassination of Admiral Darlan General Giraud was elected High Commissioner by a group of French "notabilities" in North Africa.⁵⁶

The Anglo-American-French relations during this period were taken up with attempts to arrange an agreement between General de Gaulle and General Giraud. This task was not made easier by the idiosyncrasies of these two leaders.

In January of 1943 Mr. Hull found it necessary to protest to the British Ambassador, Lord Halifax, attacks made by General de Gaulle from London upon the United States Government. Mr. Hull maintained that opinion in the United States was that General de Gaulle was attempting to sidetrack the battle in North Africa while his demands for political supremacy were being settled.⁵⁷ Mr. Hull continued that approval of General de Gaulle's attitude by much of the British press and many leaders of British opinion would not make for good relations between Britain and the United States.⁵⁸

In reply the British Government indicated that there was little it could do by way of controlling the press, but suggested that the problem might be solved by setting up a single authority to replace both the French National Committee in London and Giraud's administration in North Africa. This

56 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. IV, p. 645

57 Hull, Cordell; op. cit., p. 1206

58 Ibid.; p. 1206

Committee was not to rank even as a provisional government, but it would deal with foreign governments, be treated as an Allied Power and be admitted to the ranks of the United Nations.⁵⁹

Mr. Hull says that as an outcome of this it was decided by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill to attempt to bring Generals Giraud and de Gaulle together at the forthcoming Casablanca Conference.⁶⁰

When the "Casablanca Conference"⁶¹ convened General Giraud was present, but General de Gaulle showed extreme reluctance to put in an appearance⁶² in spite of the fact that on December 27, 1942, he had written to General Giraud suggesting a meeting.⁶³

Finally, on January 22, General de Gaulle arrived at Casablanca. There was little concrete progress from this meeting of the two French Generals.

Mr. Hull tells us that, during a visit of British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden to Washington in March, 1943 he went into the question of de Gaulle. Mr. Hull asked that the British Government make some statement associating itself with the United States regarding the disposition of French territory.⁶⁴

59 Ibid.; p. 120

60 Ibid.; pp. 1206-1207

61 Conference between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill held at Casablanca January 14 to 24, 1943

62 Hull, Cordell; op. cit., p. 1208

Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. IV, pp. 680-681

Sherwood, R.E.; op. cit., pp. 679-680

63 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. IV, p. 645

64 Ibid.; p. 1215

Mr. Eden said that his government would not agree to such a group being considered even a provisional Government of France, but did not object to a combined Committee of the two French groups that could deal temporarily with questions that might affect French interests everywhere.⁶⁵

The President's feelings were similar to those of Mr. Hull. This is borne out both by what Mr. Hull has to say in his "Memoirs,"⁶⁶ and by Mr. Churchill's statement with respect to the President's attitude during Mr. Churchill's visit to Washington in May, 1943.⁶⁷

At the end of May, 1943 General de Gaulle flew to Algiers for conferences with General Giraud. On June 3, de Gaulle and Giraud announced the formation of the "French Committee of National Liberation", of which they were co-presidents.⁶⁸

The President was concerned lest the fact that North Africa was, in the last analysis, under Anglo-American rule be overlooked. In reply to this Mr. Churchill said that in case of trouble de Gaulle would be in a minority on the Committee, as the supporters of General Giraud would out-number the Gaullists in a vote.⁶⁹ The Prime Minister, further, made it clear that he considered his official connection with de Gaulle as the

65 Ibid.; pp. 1215-1216

66 Ibid.; pp. 1216-1217

67 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. IV, p. 801

68 Hull, Cordell; op. cit., p. 1220

Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. V, p. 173

69 Ibid.; pp. 173-174

leader of the "Fighting French" now at an end. These relationships were now to be transferred to the Committee as a whole.⁷⁰

In spite of the formation of the Committee disagreements still flourished in the French set-up. Britain and the United States were anxious to retain General Giraud as French military commander in North Africa.⁷¹

At the same time de Gaulle was agitating for "recognition" of his Committee. The United States authorities were unalterably opposed, their attitude stemming in part from their desire to avoid any commitment as to the future government of France, but also very largely because of the necessity of having reliable authorities in control of the French forces. Mr. Churchill makes it clear, at this point, that de Gaulle could in no way be allowed to impair Anglo-American relations.⁷²

However, events were moving toward some form of recognition for this Committee. On July 8, 1943, Mr. Churchill had suggested "a formula for accepting the Committee and dealing with it as the organization acting for French interests in French territory which acknowledged its authority, subject always to the military requirements of the American and British forces."⁷³

70 Ibid.; p. 174

71 Hull, Cordell; op. cit., pp. 1221-1222

72 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. V, p. 177

The United States authorities suggested delay until the Committee had given further evidence of genuine unity. Nevertheless they did at the same time suggest a formula for the future which stated "that the British and American Governments were prepared to treat with the Committee as administering those parts of the French overseas empire that acknowledged its authority, and as acting as a trustee for French interests."⁷⁴ Mr. Roosevelt cabled this formula to Mr. Churchill on July 22. He stated at the same time his opposition to the use of the word "recognition".⁷⁵

The matter was finally settled after much discussion at the Quebec Conference in August. As an outcome of this discussion each government issued its own statement. The American Government in their statement proposed to cooperate with the French Committee of National Liberation, and anticipated that the Committee would further the prosecution of the war and stated that its relationships with the Committee would be governed by military necessity. The United States Government expressly stated that the statement did not constitute recognition of a Government of France or of the

73 Hull, Cordell; op. cit., p. 1225

74 Ibid.; p. 1225

75 Ibid.; p. 1225

Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., p. 181

French Empire by the United States.

The British statement while it went further and granted the Committee recognition and authority also stated that it would be for the French people, when freed, to determine the form and composition of their government.⁷⁶

As the preparations for "Overlord"⁷⁷ neared completion, the problem of the future government of France arose. General de Gaulle as early as March 26, 1944, had hinted at his ambitions when, in a speech, he referred to the French Committee as the "Provisional Government of the French Republic".⁷⁸ Needless to say this did not please the United States State Department or the President as they were adhering closely to their policy of waiting until the French people could decide for themselves.

The United States Government "was prepared to see the French Committee of National Liberation exercise leadership to establish law and order under the supervision of the Allied Commander-in-Chief".⁷⁹ Nevertheless Mr. Hull continued to emphasize the fact that the Committee was not a government.

After the Allied landings in Normandy it became increas-

76 Hull, Cordell; op. cit., pp. 1241-1242

77 "Overlord"--Code name for Normandy invasion

78 Hull, Cordell; op. cit., p. 1427

79 Ibid.; p. 1429

ingly evident that the French people were ready to accept the French Committee of National Liberation as a provisional authority until such time as a properly constituted government could be elected.⁸⁰ It should be noted that the composition of the Committee had been broadened with the addition of elements from among the Maquis and Resistance movements by September, 1944.⁸¹

In the meanwhile General de Gaulle had visited Washington and had managed to create a better impression on the American leaders.⁸² Thus the way was now opened for the recognition of the French Committee of National Liberation as a provisional government of France. The President decided, therefore, to recognize the Committee as a de facto authority in civil administration. The State Department concurred in this decision. On July 11, 1944 the decision to recognize this group as such an authority was announced.⁸³ On October 23, 1944 announcements were made, by the United States, Britain and Russia, recognizing the French de facto authority under General de Gaulle as the Provisional Government of France.⁸⁴

80 Ibid.; p. 1432

Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. VI, p. 245

81 Ibid.; p. 245

82 Hull, Cordell; op. cit., p. 1433

83 Ibid.; p. 1433

84 Ibid.; p. 1434

Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. VI, pp. 248-249

CHAPTER III

Greece and the Balkans

Tito, the Yugoslavs and Trieste

GREECE AND THE BALKANS

Postwar developments have made a major issue out of one of the questions that kept recurring during the period of active hostilities and that was whether or not the Western Allies should have been more active in the Balkan area during the war years. Churchill, in his works, is at great pains to disprove, what he terms, the legend that he strove to lure the Allies into a large scale invasion of the Balkans.¹ On the basis that Allied activity in this area might have helped forestall postwar Russian hegemony here he is robbing himself of credit for considerable foresight. However, this view is, at best, second guessing and a matter of opinion.

At the same time it must be remembered that during the war years mention by the British of activities in Greece or the Balkans was sure to bring forth determined opposition from their American Allies.² During the conference in North Africa,

1 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., p. 344

Ibid.; p. 128. Here Churchill finds it necessary to explain away the sentence expressed in a message to Field Marshal Smuts; "I have always been most anxious to come into the Balkans which are already doing so well." This sentence must be considered in the light of Field Marshal Smuts' statement in which he advocates, "a real attack on the Balkans from a suitable point in the Adriatic."

2 Roosevelt, Elliott; As He Saw It; New York, 1946; p. 184

when Prime Minister Churchill had gone to this theatre with General Marshall to confer with General Eisenhower relative to the invasion of Italy, the British Foreign Secretary made reference to the effect, upon Turkey, of our troops reaching the Balkans. Mr. Churchill considered it necessary to make quite clear that he was not, at that time, advocating the sending of an army into the Balkans.³

The reasons attributed to Mr. Churchill for desiring an invasion of the Balkans were many and varied. Captain Butcher, in his diary, says that Secretary of War Stimson thought that Mr. Churchill hoped by a successful invasion of the Balkans to prove to history that to invade the Continent from that direction was wise strategy and thus vindicate his Dardanelles campaign of World War I.⁴

General Eisenhower felt that Mr. Churchill's preoccupation with the Balkans arose out of political considerations relative to the Russians and the postwar World and also a desire to justify his strategical concepts of World War I. General Eisenhower indicates his own sympathy politically with the first of these reasons.⁵

3 Churchill, W.S.; op.cit.; V. IV, p. 826

4 Butcher, Harry C.; My Three Years With Eisenhower; New York, 1946, p. 373

5 Eisenhower, D.D.; Crusade in Europe; New York, 1948; pp. 194-195 and pp. 283-284

and, although there is little time available, I would like to make a few remarks concerning the present situation in Argentina. I believe that the present situation is very difficult and I do not think that the situation will improve in the near future. The economy has suffered from a long period of inflation, which has led to a significant reduction in the purchasing power of the population. This has been compounded by a lack of investment in infrastructure and industry, leading to a decline in productivity and employment opportunities. The political situation is also problematic, with the government facing significant challenges in maintaining stability and addressing the needs of the population. The economic situation is also problematic, with the government facing significant challenges in maintaining stability and addressing the needs of the population. The political situation is also problematic, with the government facing significant challenges in maintaining stability and addressing the needs of the population.

Yours sincerely,

John Doe
Economist
Argentina Central Bank

Elliott Roosevelt quotes his father as saying,

"Whenever the Prime Minister argued for our invasion through the Balkans, it was quite obvious to everyone in the room what he really meant. That he was above all else anxious to knife up into Central Europe, in order to keep the Red Army out of Austria and Rumania and even Hungary."⁶

Whatever Mr. Churchill's attitude may have been toward the question of action in the Balkans, there were others, both British and American, who favored it even on military grounds. Mr. Churchill quotes a message from Field Marshal Smuts in which the latter suggests operations in Italy and the Balkans as substitutes for a cross-Channel invasion.⁷

General Clark makes his own preference for actions in the Balkans very clear when he says,

"Not alone in my opinion, but in the opinion of a number of experts who were close to the problem, the weakening of the campaign in Italy in order to invade southern France instead of pushing on into the Balkans was one of the outstanding political mistakes of the war."⁸

General Eisenhower had agreed with this political point of view⁹ but General Clark goes on to say that he would have done the job in southern France thus making it possible to leave the Sixth American Corps in Italy. This he believes would have been sufficient to maintain the impetus of the Allied advance in Italy and would have permitted an advance into the Balkans.¹⁰

6 Roosevelt, E.; op. cit., p. 144

7 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. V, p. 130

8 Clark, Mark W.; Calculated Risk, New York, 1951; p. 368

9 Eisenhower, D.D.; op. cit., p. 396

Eisenhower states that failing specific instructions political considerations should not be allowed to interfere with military expediency.

10 Clark, Mark W.; op. cit., p. 369

General Clark also says that General Alexander and General Wilson were in favor of some action in the Balkans. He says that it was even mentioned by King George when he visited General Clark's headquarters. General Clark concludes this discussion by saying, "after the fall of Rome we 'ran for the wrong goal', both from a political and strategical standpoint."¹¹

In his own works Churchill's references to the Balkans, and particularly to proposed action in the Balkans, are very few,¹² so few in fact that there seems to be little basis for all that has been written about it by those who participated in the various meetings and conferences where his feelings would have been expressed and by those who have analysed the situation from documentary evidence.

A representative of the latter group is Chester Wilmot who considers the question in his book, "The Struggle for Europe". Mr. Wilmot, in his analysis, concedes that the proposed Balkan efforts were projected only as diversionary in support of efforts by one of the nations in the area.¹³ He does say, however, that during 1943 Churchill became concerned with the necessity for restraining Premier Stalin's ambitions in this area.¹⁴ This view is born out by Mr. Churchill's minutes to the Foreign

11 Ibid.; p. 371

12 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., p. 136

13 Wilmot, Chester; The Struggle For Europe; London, 1952, p. 130

14 Ibid.; p. 130

Secretary dated May 4, 1944, and quoted in his Memoirs,¹⁵ where he poses the question "Are we going to acquiesce in the Communisation of the Balkans and perhaps of Italy?" A little further on he says,

"Evidently we are approaching a show down with the Russians about their Communist intrigues in Italy, Greece, and Yugoslavia."¹⁶

After the Italian armistice London and Washington had a difference of opinion affecting this area of the World though it was not immediately connected with the mainland of Europe. Immediately after Italy's surrender the British, with Italian consent, occupied a number of the Dodecanese Islands, principally Cos and Leros. It had been intended to occupy Rhodes as well, but in this case the Italians surrendered to the Germans and the necessary assault landing was prevented by the diversion of troops, intended for this action, to the Central Mediterranean.¹⁷ This action had been agreed to by the Combined Chiefs of Staff during the Washington Conference.¹⁸

On September 18 the island of Cos was retaken by the Germans. Mr. Churchill wished to allocate sufficient forces to retake Cos and to take Rhodes thus retaining Leros. Churchill addressed

15 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. V., pp. 708-709

16 Ibid.; pp. 708-709

17 Ibid.; pp. 206-207

18 Ibid.; p. 114

a request, to General Eisenhower¹⁹ and the President,²⁰ for enough resources to supplement those possessed by General Wilson in order to carry out the project.

Mr. Churchill lists the requirements as a few naval vessels, supply ships and landing craft.²¹ He says the operation would only have meant a delay of six weeks in the return of nine landing craft for "Overlord".²² However the President was unable to agree, though he did consent to have the matter placed before a conference of the Commanders-in-Chief.²³ At the time of the conference increased German activity in the area south of Rome resulted in the scheme being finally turned down.

Concerning this matter General Eisenhower says there was nothing he could give in the way of aid. Detaching much of his air-force and any land forces would have been "detrimental, possibly fatal" to the battle in which he was engaged. He also felt that any aid he could have given would probably have been insufficient to hold the islands. He felt that the islands, though important, in no way approached the importance of the action in Italy.²⁴

19 Ibid.; p. 209

20 Ibid.; pp. 210-211

21 Ibid.; p. 209

22 Ibid.; p. 212

23 Ibid.; p. 215

24 Eisenhower, D.D.; op. cit., p. 191

Concerning the conference, General Eisenhower says that, even though the Middle East Commanders were disappointed, every officer present agreed with his decision.²⁵

The only other proposal concerning intervention in the Balkans appears to have been that for an advance from the head of the Adriatic through the Ljubljana gap to Vienna. Churchill credits President Roosevelt with suggesting it at Teheran as an alternative to the descent on the southern coast of France.²⁶

Captain Butcher in his diary, "My Three Years With Eisenhower," says that on the eleventh of August, 1944 Prime Minister Churchill had come to General Eisenhower to seek the General's support for sending enough re-enforcements to General Alexander to permit the forces in Italy to continue through the Ljubljana gap into the Balkans. Captain Butcher says that General Eisenhower felt such re-enforcements would be wasted as General Alexander would require practically all the forces he had at the time to hold the Po River valley.

General Clark feels differently. As I have previously stated in another connection he felt that, had the Fifth Army been kept intact, they could have advanced into the Balkans.²⁷

25 Ibid.; p. 191

26 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit.; p. 405

27 Clark, Mark; op. cit.; p. 369

General Clark maintains that the German authorities felt that the weakening of the Allied Armies in Italy reacted in the best interests of the German Forces. In fact he quotes one German General as saying during interrogation,

"Whatever were the reasons (for transferring forces from Italy), it is sure that they reacted to the benefit of the German high command."²⁸

As the war drew on it gradually became evident that the situation in the Balkans, and particularly in Greece, was going to be difficult at such time as the Germans withdrew their forces. Mr. Hull, the American Secretary of State, says in his Memoirs,

"It was obvious that as Germany collapsed and Russia moved in to fill the vacuum in Eastern Europe, problems of a delicate nature would arise."²⁹

Prime Minister Churchill was concerned about it also, as I have indicated earlier in this section.³⁰

The situation in Greece must be outlined in order properly to picture the situation there as the Germans withdrew. There were three separate and competing groups in the country. First of all the "National Liberation Front" (E.A.M.) and its military equivalent, the "Peoples' Liberation Army" (E.L.A.S.). This

28 Ibid.; p. 371

30 See page 36 above.

29 Hull, Cordell; op. cit., p. 1436

group was leftist inclined, if not completely dominated by Communists. Then in Epirus and the mountains of the northwest were the remnants of the Greek Army and mountaineers. Finally there were the Royalist politicians in exile. The Zervos or E.D.E.S., as they were known, gradually became mainly anti-communist. The British felt themselves under special obligations to the Royalist group as they had headed the State as Britain's ally in 1941.

As it appeared fairly certain that the Allies would win the war, the struggle between the three groups for political power began in earnest. The Greek King, on the advice of the British Government, promised a free election to determine the form of government after their liberation. The British advised him not to delay his return until after the plebiscite, but they did urge a temporary regency. The King would not agree to this and in the end a period of negotiation between the British, the Greek King and a number of political leaders was ushered in. During this period some of the Greek armed forces located in Cairo mutinied and had to be subdued by a show of British force.

In the end, however, a conference of Greek leaders was arranged at which it was agreed to set up an administration in Cairo in which all Greek groups would be represented under the leadership of a political leader called M. Papandreou who had

been brought out of Greece. In Greece itself a united military organization was to continue the struggle against the Germans.

While these events had been taking place President Roosevelt had been kept fully informed.³¹

With this as a background it is easy to see why, on a visit to Moscow, in October of 1944, Prime Minister Churchill tried to arrive at an agreement with Premier Stalin concerning the Balkan situation in general. His suggestion was that Russia and Britain agree to divide the Balkans into spheres of influence³² on a percentage basis. Stalin indicated his agreement.³³

In explanation of this agreement to his cabinet colleagues Mr. Churchill made it clear, first of all, that the percentage idea was only to express the sentiment with which the British and Russian governments approached the problems of the Balkan countries. He also stated that it did not bind the United States.³⁴

This question had been discussed in general terms with the Soviet Ambassador in London during May, 1944. At this time the United States had been consulted.³⁵ The Secretary of State, Mr. Hull, had not been favorably inclined toward the idea of spheres of influence. The President had felt that there was danger that

31 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. V, pp. 532-552

32 There is some question as to whether or not this agreement was for wartime only. Churchill's account of his conversation with Stalin does mention this limitation, V. VI, p. 227, of his Memoirs.

33 Ibid.; V. VI, p. 227

34 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. VI, p. 233

35 Hull, Cordeil; op. cit., p. 1451. Hull states that Lord Halifax broached the matter to him on May 30, 1944.

such agreements might eventually degenerate into permanent spheres of influence which he deprecated. He finally gave his assent on condition that the agreement come up for review at the end of three months. When the correspondence revealed that discussions with the Russians had preceded the messages to the United States, President Roosevelt was displeased.³⁶

In the meanwhile the situation in Greece had not improved. The E.A.M. had repudiated the agreement concerning a broadly based Greek government in Cairo. The British Government agreed to support the remaining moderate elements under M. Papandreou whose group, they felt, represented the majority of the Greek nation.³⁷

On August 6, 1944, the Prime Minister indicated to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, the possibility that British forces might have to be dispatched to Athens to secure the seat of government.³⁸

On August 17, 1944, Mr. Churchill indicated to President Roosevelt the British intention to have a small force in readiness to send to Athens upon the withdrawal or collapse of the German forces there. President Roosevelt signified his

36 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. VI; pp. 72-79

37 Ibid.; p. 108

38 Ibid.; p. 109

willingness that a small British force should be sent to Athens to maintain order.³⁹

In a discussion with M. Papandreu in Rome on August 21 Mr. Churchill, while indicating his own preference for a constitutional monarchy, made it quite clear that, as far as Britain was concerned, it was the inalienable right of the Greek people to choose their own form of government.

"But it must be for the Greek people as a whole, and not a handful of doctrinaires, to decide so grave an issue."⁴⁰

In September the time came to put the plans for intervention in Greece into action. At the end of September at a conference at Caserta the E.L.A.S. leader and the nationalist Zervos agreed to place their guerrilla forces under the control of the Greek Government headed by M. Papandreu who was to put them under the command of General Scobie, who would be in charge of the British forces which were to land in Greece. On October 15 the British troops entered Athens.⁴¹

As the Germans withdrew from the country, radical E.L.A.S. bands took their place. The Caserta agreement was violated and disorder spread. By December 1, 1944, Athens was in the grip of a general strike. By December 3 civil war had begun.⁴²

39 Ibid.; pp. 111-112

40 Ibid.; p. 113

41 Ibid.; pp. 283-285

42 Ibid.; V. VI; pp. 287-288

On December 5, General Scobie was instructed to use force to maintain respect for the British and Greek Government authority. Soon the British troops were in open conflict with units of the E.L.A.S.⁴³ This action aroused opposition and criticism, particularly from the American Press. The United States State Department issued a critical pronouncement.⁴⁴ On December 13, President Roosevelt communicated with Prime Minister Churchill. He expressed his concern and sympathy, but said that because of the state of public feeling it was not possible for his government to take a stand with the British Government in the happenings in Greece.⁴⁵

In direct contrast to this Elliott Roosevelt describes his father's reaction as being one of shocked disapproval. He quotes the President as exclaiming,

"Greece, British troops fighting against the guerrillas who fought the Nazis for the last four years. How can the British dare such a thing! The lengths to which they will go to hang on to the past!"⁴⁶

Elliott Roosevelt goes on to say that the President implied that he would take steps to prevent United States equipment being used for this purpose by the British.⁴⁷ There is a great contrast between this attitude and the one the President expressed in a

43 Ibid.; V. VI, p. 289

Survey of International Affairs V. III America, Britain and Russia; London, 1953; p. 523

44 Ibid.; V. III, p. 523

Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. VI; p. 292

45 Ibid.; V. VI; p. 300

46 Roosevelt, Elliott; op. cit., p. 222

47 Ibid.; p. 222

message to Churchill in which Mr. Roosevelt gave his position as being one of a loyal ally and explained that traditional limitations and adverse reaction of public opinion in the United States prevented him from taking a more active part.⁴⁸

During the period of disturbances M. Papandreu's government lost all control of the situation. It was suggested that a regency be set up under Archbishop Damaskinos,⁴⁹ who, it was felt, could bring some semblance of order out of the situation. However, both M. Papandreu and the King of Greece were opposed to this arrangement.⁵⁰

The military situation in Greece continued to deteriorate and on December 11 Field Marshal Alexander, on visiting Athens, found the British troops practically beleaguered in the heart of the city. The War Cabinet gave him authority to clear up the situation. On December 15 Field Marshal Alexander urged the importance of a quick settlement.⁵¹

On December 24, as a result of further alarming messages concerning the situation, Prime Minister Churchill decided to go to Athens himself. He arrived on Christmas Day. On December 26, a conference was convened in the

48 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. VI; p. 300

49 Damaskinos, Archbishop of Athens, was felt to be a figure above party rancour. Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. V; p. 536

50 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. VI; p. 298

51 Ibid., V. VI; p. 307

Greek Foreign Office. Present were Mr. Churchill and his advisers together with the American Ambassador and the Soviet military representative. All shades of Greek opinion were represented at this conference. The British were present only for the opening formalities. It was decided to ask the King of Greece to appoint Archbishop Damaskinos as regent. The British promised to continue military operations until the Athens area was cleared of insurgents or until E.L.A.S. forces accepted a truce. The British would undertake no military operations beyond Athens and Attica.⁵²

On December 30 the King issued a proclamation appointing Archbishop Damaskinos as regent and promising not to return until he was summoned by a free and fair expression of the national will.⁵³ Thus it was left to the people of Greece to decide upon their future form of government.

To conclude, fighting during December and January drove the insurgents from Athens and gave the British control of Attica. A truce was signed on January 11 and came into effect on January 15, 1945.

52 Ibid., V. VI; p. 318

53 Ibid.; V. VI; p. 322

TITO, THE YUGOSLAVS AND TRIESTE

The problem of the Balkans and communism again caused a period of tension and some differences of opinion between Washington and London as the German Armies in Italy retreated. The partisan forces of Marshal Tito advanced into Italian territory as the Germans moved out. Their aim was to seize lands they claimed and to occupy Trieste before Anglo-American troops arrived. Both the United States and Britain wished to prevent the forceful settlement of boundaries before the Peace Treaties and they wanted the port of Trieste as a supply port for their Austrian armies of occupation. Therefore, General Alexander⁵⁴ was authorised to proceed to secure the position.⁵⁵

On April 27th, Prime Minister Churchill communicated with President Truman⁵⁶ concerning the importance of reaching Trieste ahead of Marshal Tito's forces. Mr. Truman in reply agreed, saying that before entering Venezia Giulia General Alexander should communicate with Tito making clear his intentions and asking that Yugoslav forces in the area should come under his command. Failing cooperation on the part of the Yugoslavs, General Alexander was to communicate with the Combined Chiefs of Staff

54 There appears to be a little confusion in titles here, Churchill refers to Alexander as General but quotes messages addressed to him as Field Marshal.

55 Ibid., V. VI; p. 551

56 Mr. Truman had become President on Mr. Roosevelt's decease April 12, 1944.

before taking further action.⁵⁷

On April 30 Tito's forces entered Trieste and on May 2 General Freyburg's New Zealanders also entered Trieste and took the surrender of the German garrison.

Alexander, in a message to the Prime Minister, expressed the opinion that Tito might abide by his undertaking to turn the command of his forces in the area over to Field Marshal Alexander provided he were assured he would receive Trieste to become part of the New Yugoslavia. Mr. Churchill hastened to caution Alexander against making any political agreements.⁵⁸

Concerning this question General Clark, in immediate command of the forces in this area, had noted in his diary:

"Alexander understood Tito would not oppose the movement of my troops into this province, including the occupation of Trieste, Pola and other naval facilities in the Istrian Peninsular. He assumed Tito would place his troops there under my command."⁵⁹

General Clark cautioned his officers to halt and report to headquarters if the Yugoslavs offered any opposition.

General Clark was instructed by General Alexander,^{59a} to occupy the Gorizia-Tarvisio line which line Marshal Tito intended to establish as his front line. General Clark points out that to protect a line you must take a stand somewhat beyond it. To do this under the then existing conditions was likely to cause trouble.⁶⁰

57 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. VI; pp. 551-552

58 Ibid., V. VI; pp. 553-554

59 Clark, Mark W.; op. cit.; p. 443

59a An agreement arrived at between General Morgan, Field Marshal Alexander's Chief of Staff, and Marshal Tito concerning a line of demarcation around Trieste.

60 Ibid. p. 444

General Clark says that it was quite clear that Tito, "was moving as much armed strength as possible in order to back up his claims to the area".⁶¹ General Clark asked Alexander to work out a solution with Tito. However, Tito insisted on occupying the area though he was willing to let the Allies use the port of Trieste.

To return to the London-Washington phase of the problem, it is of interest to note that Mr. Churchill says he received a strong message on this matter from President Truman on May 12. In this the President is reported to have said that,

"We should insist on Field Marshal Alexander obtaining complete and exclusive control of Trieste and Pola and the line of communication through Gorizia and Monfalcone."⁶²

On May 14 President Truman again communicated with the Prime Minister; this time his tone was not nearly so firm. He wished to await reports on their messages to Belgrade before deciding what to do if the Allied forces were attacked. He said "he was unable and unwilling to involve the United States in another war unless Tito did attack."⁶³

Mr. Churchill replied that he did not envisage war with Yugoslavia and secondly what was meant by attack--what about ostensibly friendly infiltration that could endanger the Allied

61 Ibid.; p. 445

62 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. VI; p. 555

63 Ibid.; p. 557

forces? Churchill says that he felt that Alexander should exert pressure, but this should be regarded only as a frontier incident. President Truman finally agreed to a show of force by Alexander and Eisenhower that might cause Tito to reconsider.⁶⁴

Field Marshal Alexander's emissaries eventually agreed with the Yugoslavs on a line of demarcation around Trieste.⁶⁵

64 Churchill W.S.; op. cit., V. VI; p. 558

65 Ibid., V. VI; p. 559

CHAPTER IV

Operations in the Mediterranean

OPERATIONS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

After December 7, 1941 with the entry of the United States into the war the whole question of allied strategy necessarily came up for review. Prior to this time the main question had been one of holding out until such time as Britain and Russia might achieve a sufficient build-up to make offensive moves. Even some time after Pearl Harbour one of the biggest worries of Anglo-American strategists was whether or not Russia could continue to withstand German pressure. As a result of this and in answer to Russian urgings, their minds turned to consider ways and means of relieving the pressure on the Russian front. This could only be achieved by Anglo-American forces engaging German forces in some vital area.

Though the United States was in the war after Pearl Harbour and, indeed, was soon formally at war with Germany as well as with Japan, the British were concerned as to whether or not the United States might decide to concentrate on the war in the Pacific rather than in the European and adjacent theatres.¹ There was always a natural tendency to this course of action

1 Ibid.; V. III, p. 641

among some American leaders, particularly among those of the Navy.^{2,3} However, the President by word and action soon made it clear that he considered Europe the paramount theatre and Germany the principal opponent.

President Roosevelt felt that it was very necessary that American ground forces come to grips with the enemy during 1942.⁴ In his memorandum for Mr. Hopkins, General Marshall, and Admiral King, when they went to London for a Conference in July, 1942, the President placed the proposed European invasion plan "Sledgehammer" first upon his list for consideration. However when it became evident that this plan could not be implemented in 1942, particularly in face of British opposition, the President instructed his delegation to concentrate upon some operation that would involve American forces being brought into action against the enemy in 1942.⁵ It appeared that President Roosevelt personally had a bias toward operations in the Mediterranean⁶ and therefore was not unhappy when "Sledgehammer" had to be set aside and operations in North Africa considered as the project for 1942.

This feeling was not shared by many of the President's leading advisers in the United States. During the period of negotiations that preceded the decision to make North Africa the

2 Wilmot, Chester; op. cit., p. 107

3 Stimson, Henry L. and Bundy; On Active Service in Peace and War; New York, 1948; p. 424

4 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. III; p. 442

5 Ibid., V. IV; p. 447

6 Stimson, Henry L. and Bundy; op. cit.; pp. 416-419

objective for 1942, Marshall and Stimson had struggled to keep the President's attention off the, "Charming Mediterranean". Mr. McGeorge Bundy has this to say concerning the President's feelings in this matter,

"Stimson knew that the President had a lingering predilection for the Mediterranean and the Prime Minister had shown, on his last visit, that he too knew the President's feelings."⁷

Thus Stimson was concerned when Hopkins, Marshall and King left for the July, 1942 Conference in London. When the decision concerning North Africa resulted from this Conference Mr. Stimson was not surprised "although very deeply disappointed".⁸ However, it was the only solution to the President's desire for action in 1942 coupled with the British rejection of a cross-Channel attempt in that year. During the period of the London Conference King and Marshall had proposed to Roosevelt an alternate plan for action in the South-Pacific. Stimson's diary indicates that he was in agreement that it should at least be used as a threat⁹ to influence the British.¹⁰ Stimson's greatest concern at this time was fear lest "Torch" should force an indefinite postponement of decisive action in what he considered, "the only decisive theatre outside of Russia"¹¹--the continent of Europe. However, once the decision

7 Ibid.; pp. 416-419

8 Ibid.; pp. 416-419

9 Roosevelt would countenance nothing of the kind.

Ibid.; p. 425

10 Ibid.; p. 424

11 Ibid.; p. 426

was made Stimson summed up his own attitude as follows,

"We are engaged upon a risky undertaking, but it is not all hopeless and, the Commander-in-Chief having made the decision, we must do our best to make it a success."¹²

There appears to have been continued opposition to the action even after the decision had been taken. Chester Wilmot has this to say about it.

"The rearguard action against this plan, fought primarily by King prevented the early October landing."¹³

The North African shore having been chosen as the scene of Anglo-American efforts for 1942, it became necessary to implement this decision. The focal point of American planning was that the expedition must, at least in the early stages, have an entirely American complexion. The United States authorities feared French hostility toward the British, and they believed there would be more likelihood of cooperation or, at least, less danger of French resistance if the British appeared to be taking little part in the project. This stand was clearly stated in President Roosevelt's message to the Prime Minister of August 30, 1942.¹⁴ While Mr. Churchill did not fully share these views,¹⁵ he was quite ready to agree that the initial landing forces be American, provided this did not unduly restrict the scope of the operation.

12 Ibid.; p. 426; Quotation from Stimson's Diary for September 17, 1942

13 Wilmot, Chester; op. cit.; p. 114

14 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. IV; p. 531

15 Ibid., V. IV; p. 533

As a result of these feelings it became necessary to select an American general as commander of the expedition. The British Chiefs of Staff indicated that they would accept General Eisenhower as Commander-in-Chief of the expedition.¹⁶ This was approved by the President and on July 26 General Marshall informed Eisenhower of the impending appointment.¹⁷ In August the appointment was made official.

Once the decision to go ahead with "Torch" was arrived at further differences of opinion appeared. The first and most important of these involved the geographical scope of the proposed expedition. The British authorities favored a landing well inside the Mediterranean as near as possible to Bizerta.¹⁸ This did not meet with the approval of the American Chiefs of Staff. Churchill says:

"The United States Chiefs of Staff disliked very much the idea of committing themselves to large operations beyond the Straits of Gibraltar. They seemed to have the feeling that in some way their armies would be cut off in the inland sea."

General Eisenhower, on the other hand, fully shared the British view that a powerful action inside the Mediterranean, above all including Algeria, was vital to success. He says,

"I came to favor, personally, taking the entire force inside the Mediterranean. I believed that Tunis was so great a prize that we should land initially as far east as Bone."¹⁹

16 Ibid., V. IV; p. 450

17 Eisenhower, D.D.; op. cit.; p. 71

18 Wilmot, Chester; op. cit.; p. 111

19 Eisenhower, D.D.; op. cit.; p. 79

The British had originally suggested landings at Casablanca, Oran, Algiers and Bône. However, naval forces proved, according to Wilmot and Butcher, to be inadequate;²⁰ though Eisenhower makes no specific mention of this limitation. The final decision which was actually a compromise between these two points of view, was to make landings at Casablanca, Oran and Algiers.

After the invasion itself was successfully carried out, certain difficulties arose between the British and Americans relative to the dealings with various groups of French authorities. Shortly after landing General Eisenhower had authorized an agreement with Admiral Darlan. In essence this agreement was that, provided the French forces and the civil population would obey the Admiral's order to cooperate militarily with the Allies, they for their part would not disturb the administrative control of North Africa. Darlan was authorized, by the voluntary action of local officials, and with the Allies consent, to take charge of the French affairs of North Africa.²¹ Both governments backed him up in this actionon the grounds that it saved many lives.²² Darlan, who was regarded as having the authority of Pétain by the French authorities, was the only person, they felt, who could legally give the orders to cease resistance.

20 Wilmot, Chester; op. cit.; p. 112
Butcher, Harry C.; My Three Years with Eisenhower;
New York, 1946; p. 70

21 Eisenhower, D.D.; op. cit.; p. 108
22 Ibid.; p. 111

However, later on there were differences of opinion, Darlan was assassinated on December 24th²³ and after that arrangements had to be made for the government of the various French territories. The British, of course, were supporters of General de Gaulle while the Americans had General Giraud on their hands. The details of this difficulty have been treated in the section dealing with British-American difficulties over the French question.

When the President and the Prime Minister met at Casablanca for their conference in January of 1943 they had to decide what operations they would undertake after those in North Africa were completed. In the discussions at Casablanca it would appear that differences in regard to strategy were frequently not upon national lines. For example, in the early stages of the discussion General Marshall still urged a cross-Channel operation in 1943, but General Arnold and Admiral King, with the specific needs of their own services in mind, saw from the first the advantages of further efforts in the Mediterranean.²⁴ It was finally decided that the Tunisian campaign should be followed by further activities in the Mediterranean. General Marshall was persuaded to support this enterprise because complete command

23 Ibid.; p. 129

24 Sherwood, Robert E.; op. cit.; pp. 690-691

of the Mediterranean would make possible large economies in shipping tonnage. Secondly, it would not have been politically expedient or wise to have had large bodies of troops idle from the end of the Tunisian campaign until such time as "Overlord"²⁵ might be mounted. In the third place, there appeared to be a distinct possibility of eliminating Italy from the war.²⁶ After it was decided that further action in the Mediterranean should follow the Tunisian campaign a difference over the next objective arose. The Combined Chiefs of Staff favored Sicily as the move; in this they had the support of the Prime Minister. The joint planners together with Lord Mountbatten favored an attack on Sardinia.²⁷ General Eisenhower points out that the choice between the two depended upon the underlying objectives, to clear the Mediterranean for shipping. Sicily which, because of its position, practically severs the Mediterranean would be the obvious choice, but if the prime objective was a move against the Italian Peninsula then Sardinia would be the proper first move.²⁸

The Conference decided that Sicily should be the next objective in the Mediterranean. In the final report, "The Conduct of the War in 1943", the operations in the Mediterranean

25 "Overlord"; Code name replacing "Roundup" as code name for the cross-Channel operation.

26 Sherwood, Robert E.; op. cit.; pp. 690-691

27 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. IV; p. 678

28 Eisenhower, D.D.; op. cit.; pp. 159-160

were listed third after the prosecution of the anti-submarine campaign and the maintenance of supplies to Russia.²⁹ In the United Kingdom it was proposed to maintain the heaviest possible air offensive against Germany, to carry out such limited offensive operations against Germany as might be possible with the limited amphibious forces available and to continue the build up of the strongest possible forces in readiness to re-enter the continent of Europe "as soon as German resistance is weakened to the required extent."³⁰

In connection with the Mediterranean operations Chester Wilmot points out that the British felt that there would be great value in the Mediterranean operations in that Hitler must be kept busy in the months before "Overlord", forcing him to reinforce Southern Europe at the expense of the West.³¹

It is interesting to note that in connection with the Sicilian operation³² one of the published objectives was to "Create a situation in which Turkey can be enlisted as an active ally." The question of Turkey's participation was to recur at all major conferences from this time on.

29 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. IV; p. 692

30 Ibid.; V. IV; p. 692

31 Wilmot, C.; op. cit.; p. 120

32 This operation was known under the code name "Husky".

The months after the Casablanca conference were taken up by military operations designed to complete the conquest of North Africa. In the last week of February General Alexander took effective control of the ground forces in the central Mediterranean, Air Marshal Tedder assumed command of the Allied Air Forces while Admiral Cunningham remained as Commander-in-Chief of Allied Naval Forces. All this was in accordance with the Casablanca agreements.³³ General Eisenhower was very pleased with the arrangement for unified control. He had in fact signified his willingness to serve under General Alexander if this were considered desirable because of the preponderance of British forces in the area.³⁴

During the early days of May the Tunisian campaign was brought to a successful close. Even before this time the development of the Sicilian plan had been underway having begun in February.³⁵ As a preliminary to the main effort General Eisenhower and Admiral Cunningham decided to subdue the island of Pantelleria first. There was some opposition to this effort among responsible officers because of the natural strength of the island. However, it was decided to carry it out after first

33 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. IV; p. 762

34 Eisenhower, D.D.; op. cit.; p. 139

35 Ibid.; p. 161

subjecting the island to thorough bombardment from the sea and the air. General Eisenhower had his own doubts about the will of the Italian defenders to resist. In the event this lack of fighting spirit coupled with the softening up process appear to have solved the problem, for the garrison surrendered just as the allied attackers were getting into their assault boats.³⁶

Even before the attack on Sicily was due to commence Prime Minister Churchill together with General Marshall and Sir Alan Brooke arrived at General Eisenhower's headquarters to discuss "further the objectives of the Sicilian campaign".³⁷ This visitation came directly from the Washington Conference known as "Trident". At the "Trident" Conference no agreement had been arrived at concerning an attack on the Italian peninsula following up the conquest of Sicily. Churchill had desired it, but the best he had been able to obtain by way of an agreement on post- "Husky" operations was that, "the Allied Commander-in-Chief in North Africa will be instructed, as a matter of urgency, to plan such operations in exploitation of 'Husky' as are best calculated to eliminate Italy from the war and to contain the

36 Ibid.; p. 165

37 Ibid.; p. 166

maximum number of German forces."³⁸ Churchill feared that the American Staff was inclining to the idea that Sardinia should be the sole remaining objective for the Mediterranean campaign in 1943. As these plans did not satisfy him, the Prime Minister was instrumental in organizing the visit to General Eisenhower's headquarters when he, together with representative of both Staffs, might discuss plans with the Commander-in-Chief. In speaking of this conference Prime Minister Churchill says that General Eisenhower felt that if Italy were to be knocked out it should be done immediately after Sicily was disposed of and with all the means available. As a result of the discussions Mr. Churchill says that General Eisenhower understood that if the operations in Sicily were to succeed in a short time he would, at once, cross to Italy.³⁹

In his own account of this meeting General Eisenhower professes some doubt as to what the Prime Minister had in mind. From what Mr. Churchill said himself General Eisenhower felt that he was honestly concerned in a quick capture of Southern Italy, and no more, at the moment. However, General Eisenhower goes on to say that Sir Alan Brooke told him that Mr. Churchill

38 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. IV; p. 810

39 Ibid., V. IV; pp. 818-820

"would be glad to reconsider the cross-Channel project, even to the extent of eliminating that bold concept from accepted Allied strategy."⁴⁰

Captain Harry Butcher says that Prime Minister Churchill "makes no bones" about his preference for action in the Mediterranean even if it involved review of the plans for the "cross-Channel" effort.⁴¹

The only suggestion of anything concerning action in the Mediterranean, more extensive than the invasion of Italy, to be found in Mr. Churchill's record of these talks concerns a remark that he attributes to Mr. Eden, to the effect that the Turks would become much more friendly "when our troops reached the Balkans". Mr. Churchill says he hastened to make it clear that, "he was not advocating sending an army into the Balkans now or in the near future."⁴²

Whether or not Prime Minister Churchill had any such feelings at the time, it is clear that he had to be satisfied at this time with the agreement concerning the invasion of Italy that I have stated above. In General Eisenhower's words, "an agreement which, in effect, left the exploitation of the

40 Eisenhower, D.D.; op. cit.; p. 167

41 Butcher, Harry C.; op. cit.; p. 318

42 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V, IV; p. 826

Sicilian operation to my judgement."⁴³

As the conquest of Sicily proceeded favorably in spite of the fact that severe battles lay ahead and as it seemed that the collapse of Italy was probable, the American authorities agreed to a direct attack on the west coast of Italy provided no more forces were used than had been agreed upon at the "Trident" Conference.⁴⁴ They were careful to see that no operations anywhere else, especially "Overlord", should be prejudiced by more vigorous action in the Mediterranean.⁴⁵

Talk of an Italian Armistice had been going on immediately before and during the "Quadrant" Conference.⁴⁶ On July 24, 1943 a meeting of the Fascist Grand Council had supported a motion by Dino Grandi,⁴⁷ which took all Mussolini's powers away from him.⁴⁸ The King of Italy informed Mussolini, the next day, that he intended to ask Marshal Badoglio to form a new government. Mussolini was taken away to be interned on the island of Ponza.⁴⁹ In mid-August the Badoglio Government

43 Eisenhower, D.D.; op. cit.; p. 168

44 "Trident"; Washington Conference, Roosevelt and Churchill, May, 1943.

45 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. V; p. 37

46 Quebec Conference: Roosevelt and Churchill; August, 1943

47 Dino Grandi; Charter member of Italian Fascist party, one of Mussolini's principal lieutenants until the summer of 1943.

48 Kesselring, Field Marshal; The Memoirs of Field Marshal Kesselring; London, 1953; p. 168

49 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. V; p. 49

49 Ibid., V. V; p. 51

finally made contact, in Lisbon, with representatives of General Eisenhower.⁵⁰ From this time on negotiations proceeded on the basis previously laid down by agreement^{50a} between Prime Minister Churchill and President Roosevelt. Finally it was agreed that the Italian surrender would be announced September 8. At the last minute Marshal Badoglio changed his mind through fear of reprisals by the German forces in Italy. However, General Eisenhower made his announcement as planned and Marshal Badoglio followed suit.⁵¹

General Montgomery had landed on the coast of Italy on September 3. On the night of September 8-9 General Clark's Fifth Army landed at Salerno Bay. This was the beginning of the bitter struggle for the Italian peninsula that was to continue until the German forces in Italy surrendered unconditionally on May 2, 1945. These landings did not eliminate the differences arising from the divergent attitudes toward the Balkans and the Aegean Islands held by the British and American

50 Wilmot, Chester; op. cit.; p. 133

50a The agreement stated that the Allies would not negotiate but would require unconditional surrender. The Italian Government was to place itself in the hands of the Allied Governments who would then state their terms. These would provide for an honorable capitulation.

The President and the Prime Minister desired that in due course Italy occupy a respected place in New Europe, when peace had been established, and that Italian prisoners taken in Tunisia and Sicily would be released, provided all British and Allies prisoners then in Italian hands were released. Churchill, W.S.; V. V; p. 102-103

51 Eisenhower, D.D. op. cit.; p. 186

authorities. The British were ever desirous of exploiting the Italian campaign to the full.⁵² The Americans were fearful lest resources assigned to the Mediterranean might first endanger and later restrict "Overlord"⁵³ and the related invasion of Southern France, known as "Anvil".⁵⁴

At the Cairo Conference, in November, 1943, these issues were debated again. At this conference the British urged an expanded program for the Mediterranean area. They wished to set January as the target date for the capture of Rome. This, they hoped, would be followed by the capture of the Island of Rhodes in February which would result in the opening of the Aegean to allied shipping. A further suggestion in these proposals was increased aid to resistance forces in Yugoslavia. This expanded portion of the Mediterranean program, Churchill estimated, would take about one-tenth of the available resources exclusive of the Pacific area. At the same time the British proposed to continue full scale preparation for "Overlord". President Roosevelt feared that any expansion of activities in the Mediterranean would react adversely upon preparations for "Overlord".⁵⁵

In discussing the Teheran Conference, November, 1943, to which Prime Minister Churchill and President Roosevelt had repaired to meet Premier Stalin, after the Cairo Conference,

52 Clark, Mark W.; op. cit.; pp. 258-259

53 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. V; p. 128

54 Stimson, Henry L. and Bundy, M.G.; op. cit.; p. 430
Wilmot, Chester; op. cit.; p. 119

55 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. V; pp. 344-345

Churchill dealt specifically with reports that he had striven to prevent "Overlord" and to promote a large scale campaign in the Balkans and Eastern Mediterranean. He lists three main aspects of his policy: first "Overlord" to take place in May, June or July at the latest; secondly, to continue to nourish the Anglo-American army in Italy; and, finally, no advance in Italy into the broader northern part of the peninsula. He says, "I was not opposed, at this time, to a landing in the South of France" and an advance in aid of the main invasion across the Channel or alternately an advance from "the North of Italy, using the Istrian peninsula and the Ljubljana Gap, toward Vienna". He maintained that these things were not inconsistent with proper attention to the Eastern Mediterranean.⁵⁶ There are indications, however, that the Balkans did attract the British authorities including the Prime Minister himself. In the first place there was the remark by Mr. Eden, during the conference at General Eisenhower's headquarters, when the Foreign Secretary, in commenting on the Turkish situation, said that the Turks would become more friendly⁵⁷ "when our troops had reached the Balkan area." Then again, in a message to General

56 Ibid., V. V; p. 344-358

57 Ibid., V. V; p. 826

Smuts of September 5, 1943, Churchill says, "I have always been most anxious to come into the Balkans, which are doing so well."⁵⁸ Neither of these statement indicate the scale of action that might be envisaged. On April 2, 1943, prior to "Husky", Mr. Churchill had written to General Ismay,

"In any case, it must be considered a most important objective to get a footing on the Dalmatian coast, so that we can foment the insurgents of Albania and Yugoslavia by weapons, supplies and possibly Commandos."⁵⁹

the

Thus it would appear that British would have favored action in the Balkans upon a minor scale, at least, but it would appear that they fully realized at all times, the necessity for the cross-Channel operation.

To return to the actual operations in Italy, a conference took place upon Christmas Day, 1943 between General Eisenhower, who by this time was under orders to return to England to take command of "Overlord", his successor, General Maitland Wilson, and General Alexander together with other officers. The purpose of this conference was to decide whether or not the over-all interests of the Allies warranted the allocating of sufficient resources to the Italian operation to maintain the advance or whether operations in Italy should be limited to

58 Ibid., V. V; p. 128

59 Ibid., V. IV; p. 943

in effect, been abandoned because, once a landing had been carried out, a failure at Anzio could not be accepted so close to the proposed cross-Channel operation. General Clark attributes all these developments to Prime Minister Churchill's personal influence.⁶⁴ Mr. Churchill described these negotiations in much the same way. He quoted a telegram he sent to President Roosevelt on December 25, 1943 in which he asked the President to agree to delaying the departure of landing craft from the Mediterranean for sufficient time to permit the carrying out of the Anzio operation. On December 28, 1943 the President replied agreeing to the delay on condition that "Overlord" remains the paramount operation and will be carried out on the date agreed to at Cairo and Teheran.⁶⁵ It was also agreed that operations in the Aegean should be deferred in the interest of this operation and of the proposed landing in Southern France, (Anvil).

In concluding this discussion of the arguments pro and con regarding the operation, General Clark's attitude to the whole affair may best be shown by quoting his own words.

"The Prime Minister (Mr. Churchill) had again demonstrated his ability to force decisions, and it was a decision with which I fully agreed."⁶⁶

64 Ibid.; p. 255

65 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. V; pp. 440-441

66 Clark, Mark W.; op. cit.; p. 258

Later on General Clark found that the Navy expected that the landing craft to be used at Anzio would be released to proceed to the United Kingdom by February 2nd, at the latest. This would have left his invasion force on the beach at Anzio without the possibility of receiving necessary support from the sea. By January 8th he received a message saying that Mr. Churchill had made arrangements assuring the operation enough craft to bring in needed supplies and reinforcements provided the President would agree.⁶⁷ The details of these later negotiations are dealt with in a similar vein by Mr. Churchill⁶⁸ and the landing craft remained in the Mediterranean long enough to permit the building up of the Anzio forces far beyond what was originally planned.⁶⁹

In March of 1944 there was a brief exchange between the Prime Minister and the President over an entirely political matter arising out of the question of the government of Italy. It appears that President Roosevelt was under some pressure from sources in the United States to agree to major changes in the Italian Government involving the withdrawing of support from the government of Marshal Badoglio and the King. Mr. Churchill did not feel that they should give way to the pressure.

67 Ibid.; pp. 257-260

68 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. V; pp. 446-447

69 Eisenhower, D.D.; op. cit.; p. 213

There were dangers that a new administration might not hold the allegiance of the armed forces and a situation similar to the de Gaulle-Giraud episode might arise. President Roosevelt replied that the Allied Military Authorities in Italy recommended recognition of Italian political opposition groups. However, the British War Cabinet, while agreeing with the desireability of a more broadly based Italian government felt that the time was not ripe. They preferred to leave the matter until the industrial centers of Northern Italy had been liberated. By April 12th political events in Italy had come to a head and a constitutional compromise was reached whereby the King of Italy abdicated, handing over his powers to Crown Prince Umberto as Lieutenant Governor of the Realm. The final fate of the Monarchy was to be decided by a plebiscite after ultimate victory had been achieved.⁷⁰

As a result of the various developments since the Cairo and Teheran conferences the relationships of the Italian Campaign, "Anvil" and "Overlord" had to be reviewed. According to Mr. Churchill, Generals Eisenhower and Montgomery felt that there were two possible approaches: the first, the preferable one, consisting of a five divisional "Overlord" together with a two divisional "Anvil"; or, secondly, failing this, a five divisional "Overlord" and a one divisional "Anvil". Mr. Churchill says

70 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit.; pp. 502-505, 515

the British Chiefs of Staff agreed with this. But the American Chiefs of Staff insisted upon two divisions for "Anvil". The British feeling was that "Overlord" must be provided with what General Eisenhower wanted, regardless of "Anvil" and questioned "Anvil" at all in view of the fact that the Germans obviously intended to resist to the full in Italy and that in point of view of distance a diversion through Italy might be as valuable as one through the Rhone Valley.⁷¹

The United States Chiefs of Staff proposed that the matter be decided at a conference with the British Chiefs of Staff at which General Eisenhower would represent the United States Chiefs of Staff. At this time General Eisenhower, awaiting the outcome of events in Africa, wished to avoid a clear cut decision. Nevertheless the American Chiefs of Staff were pushing for a decision. By February 26th, the following decision was arrived at; according to Captain Harry Butcher. The Italian battle fronts were to have over-riding priority on all existing and future operations in the Mediterranean, but "Anvil" was to be planned with the hope of launching it shortly after "Overlord".⁷² He went on to say that this decision largely met General Eisenhower's wishes. At this time General Montgomery had

71 Ibid., V. V; pp. 511-515

72 Butcher, Harry C.; op. cit.; p. 497

favored the abandonment of "Anvil" in order to ensure adequate landing craft for "Overlord".⁷³

Soon after D-Day⁷⁴ this problem came to the fore again. On the occasion of General Marshall's visit to the Mediterranean theatre General Wilson voiced his continuing opposition to "Anvil", feeling that his best contributions to victory would be to lay the basis in Italy for the long considered advance through the Ljubljana gap.⁷⁵

General Eisenhower, in his version of these discussions, says that the Prime Minister's view was that the main purpose of this operation was to allow reinforcements from the United States to pour into Europe and that when the Breton ports became available reinforcements could equally well be brought in through them. Then Mediterranean forces could be brought in through them or better still be used in Italy for the purpose of invading the Balkans via the head of the Adriatic. Eisenhower gives his own reasons for insisting on "Anvil" now rechristened "Dragoon". He states first of all that the route from Marseilles to Metz was the most advantageous and secondly that, unless Marseilles was captured, the speed-up of remaining United States' divisions entry into Europe would not have been possible. Another important reason for his stand was that the

73 Ibid.; p. 494

June 6, 1944

74 Day of the initial landings on the Normandy beaches/

75 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. VI; p. 61

entry of a sizeable force into Southern France would provide tactical and strategic support for the main operation, freeing numbers of divisions that would otherwise have had to be used to protect its flank. The port of Marseilles, he felt, was also necessary to permit the build up of the maintenance and administrative position of the forces in Europe. Finally the question of the French divisions entered the picture. General Eisenhower felt that these forces, equipped by the United States would fight best in the battle for the liberation of France.

General Eisenhower gives it as his opinion that Prime Minister Churchill's real concern was political, that he felt the post-war situation would be more satisfactory if the Western Allies were strongly posted in the Balkans. General Eisenhower says that he told the Prime Minister that if this were so the President should be so informed and that, if it were decided that these political considerations were worthwhile, then the Commander-in-Chief should abide by their decision. However, failing this the General felt that his stand was valid on military grounds alone.⁷⁶

The decision had to be made, finally, upon the highest level and messages passed back and forth between the Prime

Minister and the President. Mr. Roosevelt insisted upon the carrying out of the Teheran agreements including "Anvil".⁷⁷

There is no dearth of conflicting opinions upon this, as upon most issues, and the differences by no means followed national lines, but were dictated more, perhaps, by personal points of view. General Clark felt that "Dragoon" should have been sacrificed to Italian interests. He felt that the decision concerning "Anvil" (Dragoon) was taken before the great successes of the Fifth and Eighth Armies in Italy were known. At the time these discussions were proceeding, he had this to say:

"The Boche is defeated, disorganized and demoralized. Now is the time to exploit our success. Yet, in the middle of this success, I lose two corps headquarters and seven divisions. It just doesn't make sense."

General Clark further states that General Juin, the French commander, was of the opinion that action in Italy should continue unhindered.⁷⁸

As he proceeded to deal with his further activities in Italy General Clark made it plain that he considered his forces were being unnecessarily drained to give more support to "Dragoon" (Anvil) even after the operation was underway. He felt that he had been ordered to perform certain tasks and yet had not received the support of Americans at "Allied Force Headquarters."⁷⁹

77 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. VI; pp. 62-70

78 Clark, Mark W.; op. cit.; pp. 379-380

79 Ibid.; pp. 397-401

Churchill, also, was not prepared to admit his views had been in error. He maintained that operation "Dragoon" failed to force the withdrawal of German divisions from General Eisenhower's front, indeed he says that on the contrary the Germans were enabled to withdraw two divisions from Italy to oppose General Eisenhower. As for Italy itself, the Italian campaign failed of its objectives by the narrowest margin for lack of sufficient strength.⁸⁰

80 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. VI; pp. 117-127

CHAPTER V

The Invasion of Europe

INVASION OF EUROPE

The grand project of the second World War, from the time of Pearl Harbour until D-Day, was the preparation and planning for the invasion of Europe. As early as December, 1941, while on his way to Washington for a post-Pearl Harbour conference with President Roosevelt, Churchill in an "appreciation" of war strategy, noted that the only way to bring the war to an end was by landings on the coast of Europe. True, though in his proposed landing places, he mentioned the Balkans, his emphasis was on various places on the west coast of Europe.¹

In March, 1942, President Roosevelt, in a message to Prime Minister Churchill, raised the question of operations on the Continent of Europe in the summer of 1942.² Again, in April of the same year, Mr. Harry Hopkins and General Marshall brought to London a memorandum from the United States Chiefs of Staff, the opening lines of which document called for the first major offensive by Great Britain and the United States to take place in Western Europe.³

1 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. III; p. 656

2 Ibid., V. III; pp. 198-199

3 Ibid., V. III; pp. 314-315

Eisenhower, D.D.; op. cit.; p. 48

Soon this early enthusiasm was forced to give place to the sober realities of the situation. In June, 1942 when General Eisenhower arrived in Britain as the Commanding General of the United States Forces in the European Theatre, his instructions were, "to prepare for and carry on military operations in the European Theatre against the Axis Powers and their allies."⁴ The military authorities were confronted, at this time, by demands in the Press for a "second front". General Eisenhower felt this to be disturbing, not because he disagreed with the basic "soundness of the idea", but because of his appreciation of the vastness of the problems to be solved before a "second front" could become a reality.⁵ He said,

"Production limitations alone ruled out any possibility of a full scale invasion in 1942 or early 1943."⁶

However, it was only gradually that the dates for the cross-Channel attack were pushed back. In early 1942 both Prime Minister Churchill and President Roosevelt were of the opinion that events might at any time make an early landing in Western Europe imperative. Foremost in their minds was the fear that Russia might be faced with military collapse and that a landing

4 Ibid.; p. 52

5 Ibid.; p. 52

6 Ibid.; p. 53

might have to be made at any cost. Much less likely was the possibility that^a sudden German breakdown might make a landing necessary.⁷

Needless to say from the very beginning Russia was constantly and consistently pressing for a "second front" which to her meant a landing by Anglo-American forces in Western Europe. For various reasons, but mainly to press for a "second front", Foreign Commissar Molotov arrived in London on May 20, 1942. In a discussion with Molotov at this time Churchill told him that plans were being studied and preparations made for landings in Europe. However, the Prime Minister also pointed out the difficulties to be overcome, chief among which was the scarcity of landing craft essential for obtaining a footing on the enemy held coastline. He drew M. Molotov's attention to the fact that any effort made in 1942, even though it were successful, would be unlikely to draw large numbers of the enemy forces from the Russian Front. Certainly nothing approximating a definite undertaking was given to Molotov.⁸

7 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. III; pp. 315 and 320

8 Ibid., V. IV; pp. 332-335

M. Molotov proceeded to Washington for conferences with the American authorities. On his return journey he again visited in London at which time the communique containing the following rather unfortunate⁹ sentence was issued by Mr. Churchill and M. Molotov:

"In the course of the conversations full understanding was reached with regard to the urgent task of creating a second front in Europe in 1942."¹⁰

At the same time M. Molotov was handed an "Aide Memoire" which made it clear that no commitment was intended concerning a "second front" in 1942.¹¹

The contemplated emergency landing in 1942 had been code named "Sledgehammer". Studies of the possibilities of this operation went forward. As a result of these studies it became apparent that the possibilities of a successful "Sledgehammer" were slight and that even if it were successful, with the resources available, the benefit to the Russians would be slight. As Mr. Churchill said of "Sledgehammer", "It fell of its own weakness."¹²

9. Subsequently Russia relying upon this statement implied a breach of faith when no "second front" was established in 1942. When this happened Churchill always produced the "Aide Memoire" which contained the words, "we can therefore give no promise". Ibid., V. III; p. 342

10. Ibid., V. IV; p. 341

11. Ibid., V. IV; 342

12. Ibid., V. IV; p. 346

General Eisenhower discussed operation "Sledgehammer" from the American point of view. He described it as the proposal for a landing with the objectives limited to the capture of a small area that could be held against the Germans and which would form a bridgehead for a later large scale invasion. The General says he favored this undertaking at the time though he knew it to be a hazardous one. His reason for favoring it was to prevent a Mediterranean operation which he felt would eliminate the possibility of a major cross-Channel operation in 1943. General Eisenhower admitted that those who opposed "Sledgehammer" were correct, since the resources available at the time were inadequate.¹³

Captain Butcher, naval aide to General Eisenhower, in his diary for July 22, 1942 discussed the question of "Sledgehammer". He gives the American view at that time as being that though the operation would be extremely hazardous, conditions on the Russian front might become so desperate that even an unsuccessful attack might be worthwhile.¹⁴

13 Eisenhower, D.D.; op. cit.; pp. 70-71

14 Butcher, Harry. C.; op. cit.; p. 28

Churchill maintains that General Marshall, at the time of his visit to London in April, 1942 had advanced a proposal for seizing Brest or Cherbourg. Churchill felt that an expedition to French North Africa would be more beneficial.¹⁵ Churchill says he welcomed with relief and joy the proposal of the United States to carry out a mass invasion of the Continent of Europe as soon as possible. This banished the fear that Great Britain had of the United States placing the war in the Pacific as her first and main endeavor.¹⁶

However, the problem of what was to be done in 1942 had still to be faced. To the Prime Minister the logical answer lay in an expedition to French North Africa. In the United States there was an influential group opposed to this venture. Stimson and Marshall were all out for "Sledgehammer"¹⁷ and "Bolero"¹⁸ as opposed to Torch (Gymnast).¹⁹ Stimson's feelings, in this respect, resulted from his conviction that he considered Western Europe the only decisive theatre outside of Russia and he feared that "Torch" would enforce indefinite postponement of action in the former theatre.²⁰

15 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. IV; p. 323

16 Ibid.; p. 324

17 Sledgehammer: Code name for limited cross-Channel operation to seize a bridgehead in 1942.

18 Bolero: Code name for project of building resources for a major cross-Channel operation in 1943.

19 Torch: earlier "Gymnast"--code name for North African landing.

20 Stimson, Henry L. and Bundy, ^{M.G.} op. cit.; pp. 418-426

In spite of the feelings of his Secretary of War²¹ the President was far from convinced, for he, like Prime Minister Churchill, had, as Mr. Stimson says, "a lingering predilection for the Mediterranean."²²

When, to this feeling of the President with regard to the Mediterranean, is added his determination that American ground forces should see action in 1942, coupled with the British categorical refusal to accept a cross-Channel effort in 1942,²³ it is not difficult to see why "Torch" was undertaken even at the expense of slowing up "Bolero". Indeed, Mr. Stimson maintains that President Roosevelt was never really sure of "Bolero" and that he and General Marshall had a continuing struggle to offset the competition of the Mediterranean.

Nevertheless the possibilities of a landing in Europe in 1942 appeared to have been well and carefully considered. At a meeting on future strategy held in Washington during Mr. Churchill's visit in June, 1942 the first two items considered and decided on were: firstly to continue plans and preparations for building up resources in preparation for a major cross-Channel operation in 1943 (Bolero) and, also to continue to prepare for possible operations in France and the Low Countries

21 Mr. Henry L. Stimson; Secretary of War in the Roosevelt Administration.

22 Stimson, Henry L. and Bundy, M.G.; op. cit.; pp. 418-426

23 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. IV; p. 434

Stimson, Henry L. and Bundy; op. cit.; pp. 418-426

in 1942 in case a sound and sensible plan could be contrived.²⁴

In July, 1942 Prime Minister Churchill communicated to President Roosevelt the British decision that "Sledgehammer" was impracticable for 1942. After this communication and before the decision for action elsewhere could be taken, the President decided to send a delegation consisting of General Marshall, Harry Hopkins and Admiral King over to London. In connection with this visit Field Marshal Dill²⁵ advised Prime Minister Churchill, "that you must convince your visitors that you are determined to beat the Germans". Field Marshal Dill feared that there were highly placed Americans who believed that nothing better than a stalemate with Germany was possible. This is revealed in a message from the Field Marshal to the Prime Minister, July, 1942 quoted in Churchill's "Memoirs."²⁶

In his instructions to the delegation Mr. Roosevelt called for a careful investigation into the possibilities of executing "Sledgehammer".²⁷ Mr. Churchill said he believed that the President, in his communications, emphasized "Sledgehammer" to convince General Marshall that it was getting a "fair show".

24 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. IV; p. 384

25 British Military Representative--Combined Chiefs of Staff, Washington.

26 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. IV; p. 440

27 The President's Memorandum for Hon. Harry L. Hopkins, General Marshall and Admiral King quoted in: Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. IV; p. 440

and the number of the species of birds seen at each point.

The first point was the entrance to the park, about 2000 feet above sea level.

The second point was at the entrance to the valley, about 2000 feet above sea level.

The third point was at the entrance to the valley, about 2000 feet above sea level.

The fourth point was at the entrance to the valley, about 2000 feet above sea level.

The fifth point was at the entrance to the valley, about 2000 feet above sea level.

The sixth point was at the entrance to the valley, about 2000 feet above sea level.

The seventh point was at the entrance to the valley, about 2000 feet above sea level.

The eighth point was at the entrance to the valley, about 2000 feet above sea level.

The ninth point was at the entrance to the valley, about 2000 feet above sea level.



Mr. Bundy says that,

"It was with considerable concern that Stimson watched Hopkins, Marshall and King leave for London to undertake a final series of discussions on Anglo-American strategy for 1942."

Mr. Stimson feared and anticipated the decision that was in fact taken, namely that of launching a North African attack in the Autumn.²⁸

In November, 1942, a misunderstanding between Washington and London arose with respect to cross-Channel operations in which the "shoe was very definitely on the other foot." Up to this time the tenor of the discussions had been British reluctance and American pressure for a cross-Channel operation, but for a short time things were the other way around. Mr. Churchill says that American Military opinion was convinced, even at this time, "that the decision for 'Torch' ruled out all prospects of a major crossing of the Channel in 1943."²⁹ But he says that he, himself, was not yet ready to accept this view. Thus he was concerned to continue as rapidly as possible the build-up of American resources in Britain.³⁰ The American authorities, Mr. Churchill says, had slowed down the preparations

28 Stimson, Henry L. and Bundy; op. cit., V. IV; pp. 418-426

29 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. IV; p. 648

30 Ibid., V. IV; p. 648

for "Bolero" in Britain. In November the British were notified that the United States would not send to Britain the quantities of supplies and personnel previously planned on. Mr. Churchill immediately addressed a protest to the President in which he stressed the importance of continuing the build-up for "Roundup", the planned operations against the coast of France that were later referred to as "Overlord". The Prime Minister quotes Mr. Roosevelt's reply in which he reaffirms the United States interests in "Roundup", but says the necessities of "Torch" forced the reduction in the shipments of supplies to Britain.³¹

Mr. Sherwood comments upon this exchange saying that Mr. Churchill had cabled President Roosevelt concerning the apparent American abandonment of "Roundup". He quotes Mr. Churchill as saying, "this would be a most grievous decision. 'Torch' could be considered no substitute for 'Roundup'." Sherwood says that the President's feelings were that the preparations for "Roundup" should continue, but that "Torch" necessarily delayed the assembling of cross-Channel forces as

31 Quoted by Churchill, W.S.; op.cit., V. IV; p. 653

the needs of "Torch" had definitely to take precedence until eventualities in Spanish Morocco and Tunisia were guarded against.³²

Mr. Churchill felt that this explanation goes far to refute the charge that he was lukewarm in his support of a cross-Channel effort.

On December 3, 1942, Mr. Churchill, as Minister of Defence, prepared a note on the progress of the war as he saw it at that time. In this note he advances arguments to back up his view that an invasion of the continent might still have been possible in 1943. He says that there was at that time a shortage of shipping, the construction of landing craft and the training of their crews had been slowed down and, in addition, "Torch" was making serious demands on shipping. On the other hand contrary to earlier expectations Russian resistance had not weakened, but had defeated the Germans. He remarks, further, that Stalin had been led to believe that a "second front" would be opened in 1943 and failure to do so would give him cause for complaint. He further notes that

32 Sherwood, R.E.; op. cit.; p. 657

German forces facing the Channel had been reduced as a result of the occupation of Vichy and as a result of the necessity to hold down Italy against the threat that was developing from "Torch". Thus Churchill concluded that the whole situation should be reviewed.³³ The foregoing, as events proved, was an over optimistic outlook.

At the time of the Casablanca Conference there was again a difference of opinion between the United States and Britain over the relative merits of "Roundup" and further activities in the Mediterranean. The United States Chiefs of Staff favored a stand-fast policy in the Mediterranean with all the Allies main effort going into "Roundup". The British Chiefs of Staff wished to follow "Torch" vigorously, accompanying it with a "build-up" for "Bolero" as fast as possible. In this instance a policy of compromise was followed and, as a result, "Roundup" was delayed and the follow-up of "Torch" was never quite what it might have been.³⁴ In July, 1943, when it became necessary to decide upon a further objective after Sicily, this fact made itself felt. The British authorities succeeded in con-

33 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. IV; pp. 655-658

34 See above the section on Operations in the Mediterranean; pp. 57-58

vincing both General Eisenhower and the American Chiefs of Staff that the mainland of Italy should be the next objective, but both of the latter insisted it should be managed with resources then available in the Mediterranean. This was to avoid prejudicing operations elsewhere, particularly "Overlord". Indeed, not only was the Mediterranean not to receive any more help, but in addition three heavy bomber groups were to be withdrawn to Britain. Mr. Churchill says the Americans "did not believe the conquest of Italy would threaten Germany, and they also feared the Germans would withdraw and we would find ourselves hitting air."³⁵

Captain Harry Butcher tells us that in the latter part of July General Eisenhower was visited by United States Secretary of War, Mr. Stimson, who had just been conferring in London. Mr. Stimson apparently feared that the British might try to avoid commitments for an invasion of France in the next spring and wished to take General Eisenhower's views back to Washington in time for the next meeting of the Combined Chiefs of Staff. The General was very guarded in his answer, expressing his support for "Roundup", but adding that there was much to be

35 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. V; pp. 37-38

said for following up the successes in the Mediterranean.³⁶

It might be worthwhile to record at this point the views of one more person who was closely connected with the cross-Channel invasion project. I refer to Sir Fredrick Morgan who, in April, 1943, was appointed Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander (designate)--in brief COSSAC. His duties were to carry forward the preparations and planning for "Overlord". In speaking of the views of the Americans and the British with regard to "Overlord", General Morgan says he took at face value the American enthusiasm for a cross-Channel invasion though he suspected that internal politics had something to do with it as, in order to avoid criticism, the United States Government had to find a use for the vast army it had created.

In so far as the British were concerned, Sir Fredrick Morgan felt that their reluctance stemmed from a natural and justifiable shrinking from the possibility of heavy casualties. He points out Britain's heavy man power loss in 1914-1918 and again since 1939 as reasonable and sufficient reasons for British leaders to hesitate to accept the responsibility for further heavy losses in a questionable operation.³⁷

36 Butcher, Harry C.; op. cit.; p. 374

37 Morgan, Sir Fredrick; Overture to Overlord; London, 1950; p. 38

In August, 1943 Prime Minister Churchill, with his personal staff and the British Chief's of Staff, left for Quebec to meet President Roosevelt and the American Chief's of Staff. This conference, code-named "Quadrant", was to be largely concerned with planning the overall strategy for "Overlord". Three officers from General Morgan's staff accompanied the Prime Minister and his party to the Conference. Their job was to outline the plans for "Overlord" prepared by C.O.S.S.A.C.

At the Conference certain agreements concerning "Overlord" were arrived at: In the first place this operation was to be the primary Anglo-American effort against the Axis in Europe. Balanced ground and air forces for "Overlord" were to be created and maintained for "Overlord" and held in readiness in the United Kingdom. Where the needs of "Overlord" and operations in the Mediterranean clashed, resources were to be distributed with the main objective of securing the success of "Overlord". The preliminary plans of General Morgan for "Overlord" were approved and he was authorized to proceed with detailed planning. The target date set for "Overlord" was May 1st, 1944. In view of the fact that American troops would

predominate in this expedition after the original landing, Churchill suggested that an earlier agreement giving command of "Overlord" to a British officer be revoked and an American commander be appointed.³⁸

Mr. Churchill made a custom of keeping the Dominion Prime Ministers informed of what went on at these conferences. When he received the information from "Quadrant", Field Marshal Smuts of South Africa was far from satisfied and sent a message to Mr. Churchill deprecating the cross-Channel plan which, he said, meant switching to a new theatre requiring huge forces and involving great risks. Smuts favored action in Italy and the Balkans accompanied by an intensified bombing attack in Europe and a slow down or temporary halt in the cross-Channel plans.³⁹

Prime Minister Churchill's reply to Smut's objections may, in part, be summarized as follows. There could be no question whatever of breaking arrangements that had been made with the United States for "Overlord". And again further on in his reply he said, "I hope you will realize that British loyalty to 'Overlord' is the keystone arch of Anglo-American cooperation."⁴⁰ Whatever his own feelings, the Prime Minister appears to have been convinced by this time that "Overlord" must go through.

38 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. V; p. 85

39 Ibid., V. V.; p. 130

40 Ibid., V. V; p. 131

In preparation for a plenary meeting of the Combined Chiefs of Staff on September 9, 1943 Mr. Churchill prepared a memorandum on the war situation. In this he declared that there must be no whittling down of "Overlord" and the seven divisions earmarked for that purpose must return from the Mediterranean by November, 1943.⁴¹ The movement of these troops, at a later date, caused considerable unhappiness to the Mediterranean commanders.

It might be well to digress for a moment here to point out the feelings of General Sir Fredrick Morgan, who had been placed in charge of planning for "Overlord". He tells us that in the early days of his work, there seemed to be a great reluctance on the part of the British authorities to get down to business and to evolve a definite plan for the day when they would have to cross the Channel. He mentions the effect produced upon the American authorities by a minute that came to hand one day from the Prime Minister. This particular document contained a scheme for the utilisation of the whole Anglo-American resources in the Mediterranean. General Morgan felt that the main purpose of such minutes was to keep everyone on his toes. The Americans had some difficulty appreciating this

41 Ibid., V.V; p. 135

fact.⁴²

At first General Morgan also found it difficult to assess accurately the American intentions with regard to "Overlord". However, a visit from the American Secretary of State for War, Mr. Henry L. Stimson, later on in 1943, did much to set his mind at rest. General Morgan comes back time and again to the fact that suspicions, by the Americans, of British intentions with regard to "Overlord" and British fears that if the operation was to be a failure they would be the main loser, caused a great deal of difficulty in getting "C.O.S.S.A.C." operation underway. He feels that the conflicting American and British views with regard to the Mediterranean and "Overlord" were never really reconciled and affected operation "Overlord" vitally. General Morgan accounts for the British and American differences on a variety of grounds. For the British, the fact that they had already been at war three and one half years, together with their experiences on the continent in 1914-18 when they suffered catastrophic loses caused them to look with care at any plans for ground warfare in Europe. As far as the Americans were concerned their lack of appreciation of the British desire for very careful planning, their suspicion of British motives

42 Morgan, Sir Fredrick; op. cit.; p. 79

growing out of their feeling that they had already been inveigled into a Mediterranean adventure that jeopardized "Overlord" resulted in their having an attitude of scepticism toward Britain's more cautious outlook.⁴³

In my section dealing with the Mediterranean action there has been considerable discussion of operation "Anvil". I have pointed out the opinions of General Mark Clark with regard to the operation.⁴⁴ General Morgan said that "C.O.S.S.A.C." had regarded with, "only mild enthusiasm", the proposal to have an attack upon Southern France synchronize with "Overlord". He says further that "C.O.S.S.A.C." had the impression that "Anvil" was to be something of a threat not an invasion of Southern France in force. In planning this "C.O.S.S.A.C." was in touch with General Eisenhower, then Supreme Commander in the Mediterranean. General Eisenhower thought that "Anvil" could take place simultaneously with "Overlord" and on a two or three divisional front. General Montgomery, says General Morgan, believed that if "Anvil" took place at the same time as "Overlord", it would gravely prejudice the success of both.⁴⁵ The final solution, in the formation of which the needs of the Italian campaign played no small part, was to stagger the timing of the two operations.

43 Ibid.; pp. 133-135

44 See above "Operations in the Mediterranean" pp. 34, 35, 70, 76

45 Morgan, Sir Fredrick; op. cit.; pp. 244-245

In October, 1943 at the time of the Foreign Ministers' conference in Moscow, communications between the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary Eden in Moscow show us why General Morgan was in something of a quandary with regard to the British attitude toward "Overlord". Mr. Churchill had received a description of the situation of the armies in Italy from General Alexander. This message was far from reassuring. In the ensuing exchange of telegrams Mr. Churchill deprecates what he terms, "battles governed by lawyers' agreements made in all good faith months before, and persisted in without regard to the ever-changing fortunes of war". He says further that he will not allow the successful campaign in Italy to be thrown away for the sake of "Overlord" in May. The assurances previously given with respect to "Overlord" in May were to be modified by the exigencies of the battle in Italy. He later added his assurance that "Overlord" would be definitely on, but might have to be delayed by the necessities of the Italian campaign.⁴⁶

At this same time, Mr. Eden, meeting with Premier Stalin, was faced with the direct question as to whether or not there would be a postponement of "Overlord" and, if so, for how long.

46 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. V; p. 290

Mr. Eden could give no categorical answer, but merely said that "Overlord" would be launched at the earliest possible moment that there appeared to be a good chance of success.⁴⁷

In October, 1943 the question of a commander for "Overlord" came to the fore. As the idea of a British Supreme Commander had been discarded, the identity of the American officer to be chosen was the remaining problem. President Roosevelt inclined to General Marshall, but there was the question of the relative importance of his position as Chief of Staff of the United States Army and the one he would hold as Supreme Allied Commander in Western Europe. Partly in order to circumvent this, President Roosevelt turned to the idea of a Supreme Commander who not only commanded "Overlord", but had an overall supervision of the war against Germany in all theatres.⁴⁸ Needless to say the Prime Minister found it impossible to agree to this on several grounds. First of all he felt that having the Mediterranean and "Overlord" under an American Commander would violate the principle of equal status among allies. In addition, he felt that it would place the Commander in question above the Combined Chiefs of Staff and

47 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. V; p. 291

48 Ibid., V. V; p. 301

would interfere with the control of national forces by the constitutional authorities in both the United States and Britain.⁴⁹ This matter was brought up again in a formal memorandum by the United States Chiefs of Staff at the Cairo Conference, November, 1943. In reply the British Chiefs of Staff and Mr. Churchill presented memoranda enlarging upon the points mentioned above. There was no formal reference by the Americans to this British statement, but Mr. Churchill believed, at this time, that General Marshall would command "Overlord" and Eisenhower would replace him in Washington.⁵⁰

In discussing the Teheran Conference Mr. Churchill is again at great pains to disprove the claims that he tried to prevent "Overlord" and to lure the Allies into a mass invasion of the Balkans. He maintains that he sought, among other things, that "Overlord" should be launched in May or June or at the latest in early July. The Prime Minister continued his pressure for action in the Mediterranean and in Italy, but he again, makes it quite clear that these actions should in no way infringe upon the prior demands of "Overlord". Mr. Churchill expresses the opinion that Marshal Stalin might

49 Ibid., V. V; pp. 302-305

50 Ibid., V. V; pp. 336-340

have fallen in with the Mediterranean plans, but that he was over persuaded by President Roosevelt and the American military leaders.⁵¹

In quoting an address he made to a plenary session of the Teheran Conference Mr. Churchill describes the activities in the Mediterranean "as stepping stones to the decisive cross-Channel operation".⁵²

In spite of Mr. Churchill's opinion that Marshal Stalin could have been converted to the British point of view with respect to the Mediterranean, the Prime Minister's own "Memoirs" indicate that the Marshal and Mr. Roosevelt had very much the same opinion relative to the respective merits of the invasion of Europe both by the cross-Channel route and from the South of France for he says that Premier Stalin was very keen on "Anvil" even to the extent of advocating a defensive role in Italy and the foregoing of the capture of Rome, if necessary, in order to mount "Anvil" two months before "Overlord". The President was of the opinion that operations in the Eastern Mediterranean would delay "Overlord" by two months. He was opposed to such a delay. Indeed Mr. Roosevelt suggested that the military experts look into the possibilities of having

51 Ibid., V. V; pp. 344-346

52 Ibid., V. V; p. 351

"Anvil" take place two months before "Overlord".⁵³

Mr. Churchill took the stand that he could not agree to sacrifice the activities of the armies in the Mediterranean, which were largely British or British controlled in order to keep "the exact date of May 1st, for "Overlord"".⁵⁴

In his "Memoirs" Mr. Churchill summarizes a private conversation he had with Marshal Stalin. In this conversation Mr. Churchill told the Marshal that the big difference between the Americans and the British with respect to "Overlord" and the Mediterranean concerned landing craft, that there were in fact ample troops available for both operations. He said that the Americans pictured the choice as one between a prompt "Overlord" and Mediterranean operations. Nevertheless Mr. Churchill believed that this was not necessarily true, he felt that, particularly, now that Russia was committed to come into the war against Japan, that landing craft previously earmarked for operations in the Indian Ocean could be diverted to the Mediterranean in which case both operations could proceed virtually as scheduled.⁵⁵ However, the Americans felt that they could not forego these operations in the Pacific.

During the second Cairo Conference that succeeded Teheran Prime Minister Churchill persistently advocated that proposed

53 Ibid., V. V; p. 356

54 Ibid., V. V; p. 357

55 Ibid., V. V; p. 378

operations in the Bay of Bengal against the Andaman Islands be dispensed with. The President refused to agree with this until Mr. Churchill received unexpected aid in his approach in the form of a request from Admiral Mountbatten for a force of some 50,000 troops for this operation. This was so far in excess of what had been anticipated that the project was dropped forthwith.⁵⁶

Whether or not this is the whole story, it is certain that General Eisenhower obtained a very different opinion from the Conference, for he says in discussing observers' impressions of the Conference that they were convinced that the Prime Minister and some of his chief military advisers looked upon "Overlord" with misgivings. They felt that pushing the Italian Campaign, invading Yugoslavia, capturing Crete, the Dodecanese and Greece would deal the Germans a serious blow without encountering, what Eisenhower admits to have been, the very great hazards of a "full-out" effort against Northwest Europe.

However, General Eisenhower admits that he "never at any time heard Mr. Churchill urge or suggest complete abandonment

56 Ibid., V. V; pp. 410-411

of 'Overlord'." His own interpretation of Mr. Churchill's attitude is that the Prime Minister believed that there should at some time, when the Allies could go in easily and safely, be a cross-Channel invasion. He believes that Mr. Churchill's opinion was that until that day came the attack should have been pushed elsewhere.⁵⁷

At this point I would like to depart a little from chronological order to discuss United States Secretary of War Stimson's convictions with respect to the "Overlord"-Mediterranean argument. Mr. Stimson's views were the outcome of a visit to London in midsummer, 1943. Mr. Bundy says that the tenor of the whole visit was fear that Mediterranean obligations would interfere with the planning and "build-up" for the cross-Channel operation.⁵⁸

In discussing Mr. Churchill's attitude toward these problems Mr. Bundy quotes Mr. Stimson as follows.

"When I parted from him I felt that if pressed by us, he would sincerely go ahead with 'Roundhammer' (Overlord) commitment, but that he was looking so constantly and vigorously for an easy way of ending the war without a trans-Channel assault that, if we expected to be ready for a 'Roundhammer' which would be early enough in 1944 to avoid the dangers of bad weather, we must be constantly on the look out against Mediterranean diversions."⁵⁹

57 Eisenhower, D.D.; op. cit.; pp. 198-199

58 Stimson, Henry L. and Bundy; op. cit.; p. 429

59 Ibid.; p. 429

A little later, at the Quebec Conference in August, Mr. Stimson felt that the Prime Minister was preparing to face the inevitable.⁶⁰ Mr. Stimson records his own opinions about the differences concerning "Overlord" in the following words.

"It (the story of 'Overlord') is a story of persistent and deep-seated differences between partners in a great undertaking."

Mr. Bundy says that Mr. Stimson saw no reason to be ashamed of his own share in these differences. If he had any share in securing the adoption of "Overlord" he was proud. However, Mr. Stimson never believed the differences to be indicative of any basic cleavage between British and American leaders or people. Mr. Bundy says that Mr. Stimson felt that once the final decision was taken there was no one more energetic in the execution of the plan or more delighted by its success than Mr. Churchill himself. He also realized that the reluctance of the British leaders to accept a cross-Channel operation was far less remarkable than the courage with which they finally supported it.⁶¹

I have earlier discussed the questions arising out of the proposal to appoint General Marshall Supreme Commander of "Overlord" and the British opposition to an over-all command

60 Ibid.; p. 439

61 Ibid.; pp. 445-446

for Western Europe and the Mediterranean.⁶² At Teheran Marshal Stalin was very anxious to have the Supreme Commander nominated as soon as possible. Finally on the way home from Teheran President Roosevelt announced his decision that the Supreme Commander was to be General Eisenhower.

At Teheran President Roosevelt had informed Marshal Stalin of the May 1 date for "Overlord". From the time of the return Conference at Cairo preparations for "Overlord" rapidly passed from the planning to the active stage.

On numerous occasions, in dealing both with the present topic and in discussing the Mediterranean operations, I have had occasion to refer to "Anvil", the operation against the southern coast of France, and a reference to it crops up once again in General Eisenhower's story of his plans for "Overlord". In considering General Morgan's plan for "Overlord" General Eisenhower had found it necessary to increase the projected attack from a three divisional to a five divisional front. This necessitated the delay of "Overlord" from May to June, 1944. However, it was soon apparent that, even with this delay, there would not be sufficient landing craft available to mount "Overlord" and "Anvil" at the same time. When this point came

62 See above; pp. 98-99

up for discussion General Montgomery proposed giving up "Anvil" completely.⁶³ General Eisenhower, however, regarded it as an integral part of the Invasion Plan and would not agree to this. It was necessary nonetheless to delay "Anvil" so that landing craft which had participated in "Overlord" could also be used for "Anvil".⁶⁴

In planning for "Overlord" the scheme was to employ the air force to demolish transportation facilities in France. This plan would, necessarily, cost many French lives. Mr. Churchill and his advisers protested against this plan upon humanitarian grounds and also (as a question of policy) with regard to its effect upon future relations with France. The question was argued out and, in the end, it was decided that the plan must go forward. General Eisenhower notes that the civilian casualties were a mere fraction of the original estimate which was 80,000 killed and also the French nation realized and accepted the necessity of the policy.⁶⁵

From this point on the planning for "Overlord" went on with no differences of opinion on a national level. The problem had now become one for the professional soldier. The questions were those concerned with the day to day planning

63 Butcher, Harry C.; op. cit.; p. 494

64 Eisenhower, D.D.; op. cit.; pp. 232-233

65 Ibid.; pp. 232-233

Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. V; pp. 528-530

involved in arranging to get a certain number of troops from one place to another as expeditiously as possible.

From this time to the final collapse of Germany the differences between Britain and the United States were on a tactical level in the main. Many of them arose out of the differing temperaments of the general officers leading the armies of the two major allies on the Western front.

The first of these involved the question of control of the ground forces. When the chain of command for "Overlord" was decided on, General Eisenhower was named Supreme Commander, Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay was given command of the Allied Naval Expeditionary Force, and Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory of the Allied Expeditionary Air Force. There was no parallel appointment of Commander-in-Chief of the Allied land forces, but General Eisenhower decided that Field Marshal Montgomery should act in that capacity for the assault and until such time as a complete American Army Group could be deployed upon the Continent. When this stage in the development of the Allied Operations was reached Montgomery took command of the Army Group composed of British and Commonwealth troops comprising the Twenty-first Army Group.⁶⁶

66 Montgomery, Sir Bernard L.; Normandy to the Baltic; Printing and Stationery Service British Army of the Rhine; 1946; passim.

There was some difference of opinion between Montgomery and Eisenhower upon this point. In August of 1944 Montgomery suggested to General Eisenhower that the above plan should not be carried through and that he, Montgomery, should retain tactical coordinating control of all ground forces throughout the campaign. General Eisenhower was not agreeable to this, particularly as Montgomery wished at the same time to retain command of his own army group.

General Eisenhower gave his reasons for his refusal to consider these proposals as follows: An army group commander's job is to give specific attention to a limited section of the battle front. A general officer could not do this and at the same time maintain adequate supervision over the front as a whole. On the other hand a supreme commander could not give day-by-day or hour-by-hour supervision to a particular part of the front, but he would be in the best position to assign principal objectives to major formations.⁶⁷

Upon this matter of command of ground forces there was a sincere difference of opinion between General Eisenhower and Field Marshal Montgomery. Montgomery was so convinced of the

67 Eisenhower, D.D.; op. cit.; pp. 284-5

superiority of having one commander coordinating the movement of ground forces, in addition to the Supreme Commander, that he offered to serve under General Bradley if General Eisenhower had seen fit to consent to General Bradley being Commander-in-Chief of the Allied land forces.⁶⁸

General Eisenhower was supported in his opposition to this move by General Marshall. In December of 1944 when a portion of the British press revived the question of a single ground commander, General Marshall cabled General Eisenhower to the effect that he was under no circumstances to make any such concession.⁶⁹

The second major point of difference that arose during this latter period concerned the plans for invading Germany, at the time of and following the crossing of the Rhine. General Montgomery favored a crossing of the Rhine followed by a single all-out push into Germany on a narrow front. At the end of August, 1944 it appeared that German resistance in western Europe was on the verge of collapse. The question was how best to exploit the situation to ensure the collapse of Germany as quickly as possible.

Field Marshal Montgomery's view--which he presented to

68 Ibid.; p. 356

69 Ibid.; p. 356

General Eisenhower was, "that one powerful full-blooded thrust across the Rhine and into the heart of Germany, backed by the whole of the resources of the Allied Armies, would be likely to achieve decisive results."⁷⁰ Montgomery added that the success of the plan would have been dependent upon the Allies ability to "concentrate sufficient strength supported by adequate administrative resources, to ensure the maintenance of the momentum from the time we crossed the Seine."⁷¹

Montgomery acknowledges that this policy would have involved dangers inherent in developing long range operations on a comparatively narrow front. However he was of the opinion that these risks were less serious than the possibility that the thinly spread, Allied administrative resources would be unable to stand the strain imposed by offensive operations on a very wide frontage.⁷² Montgomery was further influenced by the conviction that, in the case of operations on a broad front, the Allies would nowhere be strong enough to get decisive results quickly. Thus the enemy would have time to recover and a long winter campaign would follow.

If the Allies could not concentrate sufficient strength to ensure the success of a single thrust, then Field Marshal

70 Montgomery, Sir Bernard L.; op. cit.; p. 149

71 Ibid.; p. 149

72 Ibid.; p. 151

Montgomery agreed that the broad-front policy was the logical alternative.⁷³

General Eisenhower felt that the plan advanced by Montgomery was not feasible and decided on a broad-front policy. Concerning this particular discussion General Eisenhower has little to say other than that he feels that, in light of later developments, Montgomery would agree with the decision finally taken.⁷⁴

Montgomery was not alone in views concerning the relative merits of a single concentrated attack on a narrow front as opposed to a more diversified attack on a broad front. In January, 1945 when General Eisenhower informed the Chiefs of Staff of his final plan for the invasion of Germany Field Marshal Brooke earnestly protested, what appeared to him, the planned dispersion of the Allied forces. His view was that there never would be more than sufficient strength to launch one full scale attack across the Rhine.

General Eisenhower maintained that a broad-front assault was necessary to keep the German forces fully occupied. To prevent them maintaining minimum forces in static defence positions in the Siegfried line, thus making available forces for

73 Ibid.; pp. 149-151

74 Eisenhower, D.D.; op. cit.; p. 305

attacks at selected points, it was necessary to maintain attacks along a broad-front. Eisenhower also maintained that his plan would result in the depletion of German forces to be encountered at the specific points of Rhine crossings.⁷⁵

On March 7th the American forces advancing toward the Rhine River found the Ludendorff Bridge at Remagen intact. This bridge was quickly seized and a bridge-head across the Rhine established. Floating bridges capable of sustaining the troops on the far side were quickly built to supplement the captured bridge and to provide alternative lines of communication should it be destroyed. The campaign on the west of the Rhine continued with full momentum and by March 25th all organized resistance west of the Rhine had ended. By April 1st the Allies had crossings over the Rhine in every main channel selected for invasion purposes.

The time had come to plan the movement of forces to complete the final destruction of German military power. General Eisenhower planned that an encirclement of the Ruhr should be the first step in this program as this would isolate the industrial Ruhr from the rest of Germany and at the same time result in the destruction of one of the largest forces still

75 Ibid.; pp. 370-371

remaining to Germany.⁷⁶

At this time the Supreme Commander felt that it was militarily impractical to advance on Berlin in spite of its political importance. He had two reasons for this opinion. In the first place the Russians were poised on the Oder and would in all probability encircle the city before Eisenhower's forces could arrive. Secondly, to have maintained a strong force over the distance to Berlin would have meant the practical immobilization of the rest of the front. This would have interfered with two other projects that he regarded as essential. The first of these aims was to split Germany by as rapid a junction with the Red forces as possible.

The second objective was concerned with the fear that the Germans would attempt to establish a so called "National Redoubt" in the mountains of Southern Bavaria for the purpose of maintaining last-ditch resistance. General Eisenhower feared, that if this plan were carried out by the enemy, he would have been involved in a combination of a long and costly siege together with guerrilla warfare. To prevent this he decided that it would be necessary to over-run the entire country as quickly as possible.

To accomplish these aims Eisenhower planned an advance comprising three essential parts. The first one was to be carried out by General Bradley's forces across the center of Germany to accomplish a junction with the Russians somewhere along the Elbe. The second and third parts would be rapid advances upon either flank. The northern prong of this advance was to cut off Denmark while the southern one was to push into Austria.⁷⁷

At this point the Supreme Commander carried through a procedure that brought a strenuous protest from Prime Minister Churchill. General Eisenhower presented his plan to Generalissimo Stalin. Mr. Churchill objected on two grounds, he disliked the over-all plan and, in addition, he felt that the stage had been reached where military decisions might have political repercussions and thus should be submitted to political authorities. Therefore, General Eisenhower had exceeded the authority granted him to communicate with the Russians on purely military matters.⁷⁸

Mr. Churchill communicated his views to the United States Chiefs of Staff who replied supporting the Supreme Commander's

77 Ibid.; p. 398

78 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. VI; pp. 458-462

strategy. They noted that the Battle of Germany was at a stage where the field commander was in the best position to judge what measures should be taken next. They also said that in their opinion Eisenhower's procedure in communicating with the Russians had been an operational necessity. However, the United States Chiefs of Staff suggested that General Eisenhower should be asked to delay answering any new Russian requests for further information until he had heard from the Combined Chiefs of Staff.⁷⁹

Mr. Churchill was insistent that the Western Allies should enter Berlin before the Russians. General Eisenhower failed to see the value in this as the occupation zones had already been agreed upon and the eastern advance of British and American forces could in no way have altered this.⁸⁰

General Eisenhower was of the opinion that the future division of Germany should in no way affect military plans. These plans should have "the single aim of speeding victory". Political adjustments could come later.⁸¹

79 Ibid.; V. VI; pp. 462-464

80 Eisenhower, D.D.; op. cit.; pp. 399-403

81 Ibid.; pp. 396-399

In dealing with this period in conduct of the War Mr. Churchill takes an entirely different approach. He says that, while they could not be certain, the British Chiefs of Staff considered prolonged resistance by the Germans in the mountains unlikely. Mr. Churchill says that he was convinced that with the destruction of Germany, "Soviet Russia had become a mortal danger to the free world, that a new front must be created against her onward sweep, that this front in Europe should be as far east as possible, that Berlin was the prime and true objective of the Anglo-American armies."⁸²

He adds:

"Finally, and above all, that a settlement must be reached on all major issues between the West and the East in Europe before the armies of democracy melted, or⁸³ the Western allies yielded any part of the German territories they had conquered, or, it could soon be written, liberated from totalitarian tyranny."⁸³

It would seem that Mr. Churchill and General Eisenhower agreed that territorial adjustments could come after military action was completed, but that they differed in regarding the withdrawal to previously agreed occupation zones as being automatic. Mr. Churchill wished to see the Anglo-American forces in control of territory previously allocated to the

82 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit.; V. VI; pp. 456-457

83 Ibid., V. VI; p. 457

Soviet Union. He wished to maintain them there and, if necessary, to use their presence in Soviet occupation territory and their eventual withdrawal as a bargaining point in obtaining the settlement of questions in dispute between the western Allies and the Soviet Union.⁸⁴

General Eisenhower voices no opinion on the possible political reasons for Mr. Churchill's stand. He bases his own decisions purely on the grounds of military expediency. This was the correct attitude for a commander in the field for if political considerations were to influence military decisions then the political authorities should have issued specific instructions to that effect.

It is understandable that American military authorities, unexperienced in the machinations of European politics should have taken the view that they did.⁸⁵ It is, however, more difficult to understand how the American leaders in Washington could apparently have missed the growing signs of Russian truculence as German power declined.⁸⁶

While Mr. Churchill's disagreement with General Eisenhower's plan to concentrate the Allies' advance upon political

84 Ibid., V. VI; pp. 573-575 and 601-602

85 Pogue, Forrest C.; "Why Eisenhower's Forces Stopped at the Eibe", World Politics V (April, 1952); pp. 359-360

86 Ibid.; p. 362

grounds, he also feared that the weakening of Montgomery's forces would destroy the momentum of their advance and reduce their operations to an almost static condition along the Elbe.⁸⁷

Politically he feared that the Russians, whom he expected to overrun Austria, would, if they also occupied Berlin, gain an exaggerated opinion of their own contribution toward the downfall of Germany. In order to counteract this Mr. Churchill proposed that the Western Allies should march as far east as possible and, if Berlin were within their grasp, they should take it. As early as April 5, 1945 the Prime Minister, in a message to President Roosevelt, gave expression to his misgivings about future relations with Russia. He feared that the cryptic tone of Russian messages foreshadowed some change in Soviet policy. At this time he advocated taking a firm stand toward Russia and that Anglo-American forces should hold as much territory in the north as possible. In making these suggestions he noted that Russia had, at the time, sent no confirmation of the provisional zones of occupation agreed

87 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit.; V. VI; p. 465

to at Yalta.⁸⁸ General Eisenhower had proposed that once the western and eastern armies established contact, where they had advanced beyond the boundaries of their occupation zones, the Army Group Commanders should have necessary power to request and to order withdrawals behind the boundaries of their occupation zones and, that, subject to operational necessities, the withdrawals would then take place. Mr. Churchill considered this "a matter of State to be considered between the three Governments and in relation to what the Russians do in the South".⁸⁹

In concluding this section some reference should perhaps be made to the press reports of a recent speech of Sir Winston Churchill in which he is alleged to have said that during the later stages of the operations in Europe he ordered Field Marshal Montgomery to have German weapons available for re-issue to the Germans if relations with Russia deteriorated to the point where this became necessary. As Sir Winston Churchill remarked there is no mention of this in his "Memoirs". Viscount Montgomery is reported to have said that he did receive such a message. Later accounts quote Mr. Churchill as stating that searches have failed to reveal any evidence of the existence of such a message. To speculate upon this matter

88 Ibid., V.VI; p. 512

89 Ibid.; pp. 512-513

89a New York Times; Tuesday, Nov. 24, 1954; p. 1
Manchester Guardian, Thursday, Dec. 2, 1954; p. 5
Manchester Guardian, Thursday, Dec. 9, 1954; p. 5

would be futile but, except for the eventual destination of the weapons in question, there is ample evidence that the Prime Minister did suggest to General Eisenhower,⁹⁰ and in all probability to Field Marshal Montgomery as well, that German weapons and equipment be salvaged as there might be great need of them in the future. While the Prime Minister does not mention relations with Russia as the reason for his concern in this matter there is little doubt, in view of his general attitude toward Soviet policy, that this is what he had in mind.

The differences of opinion between the two Western Allies over the possible occupation of Berlin and question of evacuating Russian zones of occupation were the last to cause concern during the period of active military operations against the Third Reich. The rumblings that presaged the post-war clashes were soon to break forth with such violence that the whole of the Western World was to be left in no doubt about the difficulties of co-existence with resurgent Communism. The absorption, by Russia, of Poland was soon to be eclipsed by the Communist inundation of China. The United States that

90 Ibid., V. VI; p. 574

hesitated to remain in Russian zones of occupation, in a few short years, was to find herself in the van of the nations opposing, with armed force, the spread of Communism in Asia.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion

CONCLUSION

A careful study of the available material on the question of Anglo-American policy in Europe during the period under discussion brings to light many points of difference. There were divergent views at all levels, strategic, tactical and political. For the most part these conflicting views arose from the honest beliefs, on the part of those that held them, that their way was the best way to achieve the common goal which was the complete defeat of the Axis. At other times the views held by the national authorities had their roots in the historic and traditional policies of the respective countries.

In almost every case where these disputes had to be taken to the highest level for solution both Prime Minister Churchill and President Roosevelt held out to the last for what they believed to be both right and most effective. However, once either of them had given way to the other, he went all the way giving whole hearted support to the policy he had previously opposed.

In some cases it is very clear that the divergent stands taken by the two leaders were dictated, less by their own

convictions, than by the practical necessities facing the political leaders of great democracies even in wartime. On occasion they frankly told one another that such is the case. An instance of this type of situation was President Roosevelt's communications to the Prime Minister upon the occasion of British intervention in Athens.¹ When such considerations arose each was well able to appreciate the situation of the other.

In the past the clash of national interests have resulted in the collapse of most coalitions, so that the strange element in the story of Anglo-American cooperation is not that differences arose, but that they occasioned as little disruption of the main effort as they did. As time passes much of the greatness of the leaders, Churchill, Roosevelt, Eisenhower, Alexander and their lieutenants may well be seen to lie in their ability to work one with the other for what all conceived to be the common good of all Mankind.

1 Churchill, W.S.; op. cit., V. VI; p. 300

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